



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: HURDLES AND MEASURES

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ABSTRACT:

Women Empowerment is the vital instrument to expand women's ability to have resources and to make strategic life choices. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of up liftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. Of prior days' women were not treated equal to men in many ways. They did not have share in the property of their parents, they had no voting rights, and they had no freedom to choose their work or job and so on. Now that we have come out of those dark days of oppression of women, there is a need for strong movement to fight for the rights of women and to ensure that they get all the rights which men have or in other words a movement for the Empowerment of Women. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. Because, to help women is to help society. The purpose of the paper is to discuss some issues of Women Empowerment, to know about the hurdles to achieving women empowerment, needs for Women Empowerment in modern context, to know the role of education in Women Empowerment, measures for ensuring Women Empowerment and some suggestion for achieving equal human rights of women.

KEYWORDS:

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, FREEDOM, STRONG MOVEMENT, SOCIETY, EDUCATION.

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study, therefore, is an attempt to fulfill the following objectives:

- To know about concept of Women Empowerment.
- To know the needs of women empowerment.
- To discuss the hurdles to achieving women empowerment.
- To discuss some ways of empowered women.
- To know the role of education in women empowerment.
- To discuss the measures for ensuring women empowerment.
- Some suggestion for achieving equal human rights of women.

II. INTRODUCTION:

"There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the situation of women is improved." - Swami Vivekananda.

Empowerment of women is essentially the process of up liftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It involves the building up of a society where women can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure. After independence policies and programmes exist at the state level and national levels in many sectors to improve

women's status. But there exists more extensive gap between policy advancement and its genuine usage at the general public level. So, we need to change the standard depiction of women as a dynamic object.

III. CONCEPT WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Women play a crucial role in development of family, group, society and ultimately the nation. Women need to be viewed as productive members of the society sharing equal authority and responsibilities of being citizens. Social justice also demands equal participation by women in the nation building process and other activities. Women's empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. Empowerment is the process that creates power in individuals over their own lives in society, and in their communities. Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society.

IV. NEEDS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

"You can tell the condition of a country by looking at the status of its women"-Jawaharlal Nehru.

Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the **sustainable development** of the country. Many world leaders are argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment. It is widely believed that, the full participation of both men and

women is critical for a good developmental society. Without gender equality and empowerment, the country could not be just, and social change wouldn't occur. Therefore, leaders are agreeing that women's empowerment plays a huge role and significant contributions in development. Without the equal inclusion of women in development, women would not be able to benefit or contribute to the development of the country.



V. HURDLES OR BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

The society is more biased in favour of female child in respect of education, nutrition and other opportunities. Women often internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural thus inflicting an injustice upon them. It is the factor that poses challenge in realizing women's empowerment. There are several challenges that are plaguing the issues of women's right in India. Like -

- **Education:** While the country has grown from leaps and bounds since independence where education is concerned. The gap between women and men is severe. While 82.14% of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are known to be literate in India. The gender bias is in higher education, specialized professional trainings which hit women very hard in employment and attaining top leadership in any field.
- **Poverty:** Poverty is considered the greatest threat to peace in the world, and eradication of poverty should be a national goal as important as the eradication of illiteracy. Due to this, women are exploited as domestic helps.
- **Health and Safety:** The health and safety concerns of women are paramount for the wellbeing of a country and are an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However, there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned.
- **Professional Inequality:** This inequality is practiced in employment and promotions. Women face countless handicaps in male customized and dominated environs in Government Offices and Private enterprises.
- **Morality and Inequality:** Due to gender bias in health and nutrition there is unusually high mortality rate in women reducing their population further especially in Asia, Africa and China.
- **Mental harassment:** It is an age old convention that women are less capable and inefficient in

working as compared to men. The attitude which considers women unfit for certain jobs holds back women. In spite of the constitutional provisions, gender bias creates obstacles in their recruitment.

- **Sexual harassment:** Today, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. They face sexual harassment on way on transports, at working places, educational institutions and hospitals, at home and even in police stations when they go to file complaints. It is shocking that the law protectors are violating and outraging modesty of women.

VI. WAY TO EMPOWER WOMEN:

"Empowerment of women has become the solution to many societal problems"- Rameshwari Pandya (2008).

Women's rights are the fundamental human rights that were enshrined by the United Nations for every human being on the planet nearly 70 years ago. These rights include the right to live free from violence, slavery, discrimination, to be educated, to own property, to vote and to earn a fair and equal wage. Women are the building blocks of our society. She must be made strong for a stronger society and her status should come at par with men. To promote gender equality and to empower women in India, the United Nations Development Programme created Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

In 1985 government took a step for the overall development of women and children by creating the department of the Ministry for Women and Child Development under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. In 2006 this department was upgraded to the status of a Ministry. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was enacted by the Ministry. It also brought in a unique law – the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. It launched several schemes for the welfare of women and children such as the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG), Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme etc.

There are various rules, regulations, act and laws made by the Indian government regarding the safety of women in India. However, a new act (Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015) has been passed by the Indian government by replacing the earlier one of 2000 (Indian juvenile delinquency law of 2000) to reduce the juvenile age from 16 to 18 years especially in case of heinous offenses (after **Nirbhaya case**).

❖ SOME WAY OF POINT OUT HERE-

- Freely live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity,
- Have complete control of their life, both within and outside of their home and workplace,

- To make their own choices and decisions,
- Have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities,
- Have equal rights for social and economic justice,
- Get equal opportunity for education, employment and comfortable working environment.

VII. ROLE OF EDUCATION:

It is said that education increases "people's self-confidence and also enables them to find better jobs and they can work shoulder to shoulder with men". They engage in public debate and make demands on government for health care, social security and other entitlements". In particular, education empowers women to make choices that improve their children's health, their well-being, and chances of survival. Education informs others of preventing and containing the disease, and it is an essential element of efforts to reduce malnutrition. Furthermore, it empowers women to make choices that can improve their welfare, including marrying beyond childhood and having fewer children. Crucially, education can increase women's awareness of their rights, boost their self-esteem, and provide them the opportunity to assert their rights.

VIII. MEASURES FOR ENSURING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a whole family."- Mahatma Gandhi.

Social change is possible through education hence women's education has to be paid special attention. Global education for all underneath 14 years ought to be entirely executed. A watch must be kept on reduction rate of girls and corrective measures ought to be taken for that. Women should be permitted to work and must be sufficiently given security and support to work. Women should to be given right wages and work at standard with men so that their status can be raised in the public eye.

Gender Empowerment is conceived as a process by which women can overcome many of the hurdles that they face such as education, work status, employment opportunities, health care, social security, position in decision making by virtue of their gender. Thus gender empowerment veritably implies empowerment of women to do away with "subordination" or "discrimination" and "injustices" done to them in male dominated society. India has pledged itself to gender equality through several Articles of the constitution- Articles (14, 15-1, 15-3, 16, 39-a, 39-d, 42, 51-A, e).

❖ SOME MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN. THOSE ARE:

- Changes in women's mobility and social interaction.
- Changes in women's labour patterns.

- Changes in women's access to and control over resources.
- Changes in women's control over Decision making.
- Providing proper education.
- Self-employment and Self-help group.
- Providing minimum needs like Nutrition, Health, Sanitation, Housing.

IX. SOME SUGGESTION FOR ACHIEVING EQUAL HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN:

"I learned about women's empowerment, women's rights, gender equity... Now I can raise my voice against any form of violence..."

- Proper awareness for laws should be there that is law should not be restricted to papers only but the implementation of law should be there so that every woman can be familiar with her rights. Significant steps should be taken to implement all the laws which are amended to facilitate detention, prevention and punishment of crimes against women.
- Women education has to be made compulsory and women should be encouraged to become literate because without being educated women cannot have an access to her right.
- Strict implementation of the schemes and policies for women empowerment should be done.
- Awareness camps for women should be organized where they can become familiar with the framed schemes and policies and can take benefit of those schemes and policies.

X. CONCLUSION:

"That nation which doesn't respect women will never become great now and nor will ever in future"- Swami Vivekananda.

The Empowerment of Women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century not only at National Level but also at the International Level. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self-decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality. For the development of the economy women and men both should work together and women should utilize their skills. Women empowerment is an essential element in national development. Since women constitute half of the population there can be no development unless the needs and interests of women are fully taken into account.

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