

AN ANALYSIS OF NEW DIMENSIONS IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY

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Abstract:

Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditional under privileged ones in the society. It involves the building up of a society wherein 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. The present paper deals with to analyze the socio-economic dimensions, political and educational dimensions of the women empowerment in national and world wide process. The paper also deal with role and measures of the women empowerment. The present paper it based on secondary sources of information.

Key words: Welfare, SHG, Empowerment, Education, Health, Education

Introduction:

Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditional under privileged ones, in the society. It involves the building up of a society wherein women can breathe without the fear of oppression, exploitation, apprehension, discrimination and the general feeling of persecution which goes with being a woman in traditionally male dominated structure.

The origins of the concept of empowerment go back to the civil rights movement in the USA in 1960. It then since interprets differently and filled with new meanings and is today used in such different sectors as business social work, development discourse and by advocates of very different political agendas. The different definitions of the empowerment range between defining it as a largely individual process of taking control and responsibility for one's life and situation, and defining it as a political process of granting human rights and social justice to a disadvantaged group of people. At the former end of the

continuum, where empowerment is defined largely as an individual process, empowerment can be used in the conservative political public speaking of freeing the government of responsibility for injustices and for granting social security. Instead, the argument makes individual and communities responsible for their own social security and welfare, without providing the necessary support and resources. The empowerment of women is located within the discourse and agenda of gender equality and is increasingly being taken on the agenda of international development of organizations, perhaps more as a means to achieve gender equality than as an end itself.

At the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1993 and the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo 1994 Government committed themselves to the empowerment of women. This commitment was operationalized and formulated into a clear action plan at the Fourth World Conference on women in Beijing 1995 where Governments committed themselves to the "empowerment and advancement of women, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, thus contributing to the moral, ethical, spiritual and intellectual needs of women and men, individually or in community with others and thereby guaranteeing them the possibility of realizing their full potential in society and shaping their lives in accordance with their own aspirations".

Different Levels of Empowerment in line with most theorists on empowerment the one has to view empowerment as taking place on different levels and that change on all levels is necessary if the empowerment of women is really to occur. We have to relate empowerment at three levels: empowerment of the individual, group, and societal/ community- level and the interaction between these. The individual level deals with individual Women's abilities to take control over their lives, their perceptions about their own value and abilities, their abilities to identify goal and work towards this goal. The group level deals with the collective action and sense of agency that women experience together, in a group.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

India is a country of grand contradictions. While it is a global leader in the knowledge economy, it is also having more than half the world's poor and illiterate people, most of whom are women (Reddi & Sinha, 2004). Indian women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education and also reproductive healthcare. Women are found to

beeconomically very poor all over the India. A few women are engaged in services and other activities. So they need economic power to stand on their own legs on a par with men. Other hand, it has been observed that women are found to be less literate than men.

According to 2001 census rate of literacy among men in India to be 76% whereas it is only 54% among women. Thus, increasing education among women is of very important empowering them. It has also noticed that some of women are too weak to work. They consume less food but work more. Therefore, from the wealth point of view, women folk who are to be weaker are to be made stronger. Another problem is that workplace harassment of women. There are so many cases of rape, kidnapping of girl, dowry harassment, and so on. For those reasons, they require empowerment of all kinds in order to protect themselves and to secure their purity and dignity. To sum up, women possible unless women come with and help to self-empowerment cannot be themselves. There is a need to formulate reducing feminized poverty, Promoting education of women, elimination and prevention of violence against women. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru first Prime Minister of India once remarked, "To awaken the people, it is women who must awaken; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, and the nation moves" So there is a greater need of bringing women into mainstream of development of India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the historical background of women empowerment.
- To analyze the socio-economic dimensions of the women empowerment.
- To study the political dimensions of women empowerment.
- To identify the role of education in women empowerment.
- To know the measures for ensuring women empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

The present paper, it is based on secondary source information gathered from different source like journal articles, books, reports, magazines, websites etc.

ANALYSIS

Historical Background: Half of the humanity - women have been suffering from disability, discrimination, injustice and inequality all over the world for almost many centuries. They receive small share of development opportunities, they are often deprived educational opportunities; better jobs; political system or of adequate health care facilities. For centuries women have been regulated to a secondary status in the family and the society. All over the world women are always dominated by men on the basis of sex, gender and patriarchal views 'Sex' issued to indicate the biological differences between female and male i.e., female can bear and nurse children and male cannot. This difference is created by nature but 'Gender' represents the society constructed differences – in terms of accepted attributes, roles and relationships between women and men and girls and boys in given society. The concept assumes that the gender differences apparent every Society have been created and reproduced through socio-cultural, religious, Political and economic factors, which are lenses through which biological differences have been viewed and interpreted. Thus while women's child bearing abilities are part of their sex, the confinement of women to the home in many cultures is due to their gender. The notion of biological difference' is, often used to justify discrimination beliefs about women and men's relative intelligence, emotional behaviour or suitability to certain jobs. Women are commonly portrayed as among the most oppressed people in the third world. Indeed, the experience of the majority of women of the subcontinent are grounded in both poverty and patriarchy, patriarchy means the rule of father. Patriarchy is used to refer to male domination, to power relationship by which men dominate women, and especially to the system through which women are kept subordinate. Patriarchy constrains women in all facets of life i.e., women's reproductive abilities, women's ownership and control on property and other economic resources including the access to education and information etc. Overall structure of patriarchy allows men in general more mobility, authority and control than women in general. In this socially constructed, rigid and narrowly defined gender roles, it is 'woman' who pays the price in much more obvious way. Above all issues are women's issues. they affect women and along with them their families, communities, economies and societies are also affected. So still more recent is the growing realization and recognition all over the world that women empowerment is absolutely essential for human, national and real global development, Nobel Laureate Dr. Amartya Sen sees 'development as freedom' which in turn empowers. He emphasizes, "Indeed, the

empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development formany countries in theworld today,

Socio-Economic Dimensions; Socialempowerment means a more equitable social status for women in societybecause theprimary responsibilityofany human society is to ensurehuman dignity to all members. It is oftenargued that facilitating women's access to money is not effective means forachieving women's empowermentunless it is linked to other kinds of activities like training on awareness of the impact of women's subordination,concept of self-esteem and on the meaning and benefits of empowering women. The approach to gender equity isbased on the recognition that all interventions in favour of women must ensure an environment free from all formsof violence against women and also ensure the participation and adequate representation of women at highestpolicy levels. For today's women, fewer things are in the category of 'not done', compared to the time ofindependence. One of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education-1986 is to promote empowerment of women through the agency of education and it is considered as a landmark in the approach to women education.The National Literacy Mission is another step towards eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15-35 years bythe year 1988. The universalization of elementary education, enrolment and retention of girls in the schoolspromotion of balwadis and crèches, increasing the number of girls' hostel, women's polytechnics and multi-purpose institutions, non-formal adult education and open and distance education programmes were some of theother steps taken to boost women's education leading to social empowerment.

Political Empowerment: In the case of pourers, those who never cast their vote in elections declined and acontrary trend prevails with regard lo tho? who cast their votes irregularly and regularly in elections after enteringinto dairying. Among palamitras, those who never cast votes and cast irregularly in elections have declined asagainst an increase in the case of those who cast their votes in elections regularly. The segregation of respondentson the basis of age, caste, income, nature of family and level of income and their views on casting votes inelections shows that those who never cast their vote in elections have either declined or increased and those whoeither irregularly or regularly cast their votes in elections increased atter undertaking dairying. Consequent onentering dairying the proportion of pourers and palamitrag with no interest in matters had declined whilst that ofthose with interest in political matters to some extent and to a great extent in thepeg-period. It is surprising tonote that the palamitras who are considered to be richer am slightly mote as ampared to Pourers in

the first option. It infers that the rich not internad in political matters relative to the poor. Hence influence of dairying on political&airs is greater in the poor when compared to the rich. The rich may be away from political issues to safeguardtheir income andwealth. The respondents with no intern in political &airs have declined while those who had interestto some extent increased and those with interest to a great extent have either increased or fomed &sh in all theclassifications based on income, age, nature of family. caste and education in the post-period. It can be observedthat in both the pourers and palanitrans, there is a decline in the number of those who did not participate in thedemocratic process/institutions in any form while those who participated to some extent and to a great extent haveincreased in the post-period. There is a decline in the shah. of respondents with no participation in democraticinstitutions as against an increase in those who participate to some extent and those who participate to a greatextent this can be noticed among respondents across all categories such as age, education, caste, income and familytype.

Role of Education According to the Indian constitution, women are legal citizens of our country and have equalrights with men. Owing to the lack of acceptance from the male dominant society. Indian women suffer tremendously. Women empowerment is a global issue and discussion on women political right are at the forefrontof many formal and informal campaigns worldwide. The concept of women empowerment was introduced at theinternational women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment because itenables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. So that we canneglect the importance of education in reference to women empowerment, India is poised to becoming superpowera developed country by 2020. Education increases the economic, social and political opportunities available towomen. Education increases women's knowledge about controlling fertility and access to family planning services and often encourages them to delay the age at which they marry.

Measures of Ensuring for Women Empowerment:

Some measures have been taken or empowerment of women.

- Changes in women's mobilityand socialinteraction, Changes in women's labour patterns.
- Changes in women's access to and control over resources and

- Changes in women's control over Decisionmaking
- Providing education
- Self-employment and Self-help group
- Providing minimum needs like Nutrition, Health, sanitation, Housing
- Other than this society should change the mentality towards the word women Encouraging women to develop in their fields they are good at and make a career.
- At present, the Government of India has over 34 schemes for women operated by different departments and ministries. Some of these are as follows:
 - Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAGI(2010)
 - The Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers
 - Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS 2009-2010).
 - Dhanalakshmi (2008).
 - Short Stay Homes.
 - Ujjawala (2007).
 - Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan).
 - Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
 - Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana (PMRY).
 - Women's Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS)

CONCLUSION

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. The popular UNESCO slogan should be considered as an ideal for not only empowerment but also development of women: Educate a man and you educate an individual: educate a woman and you educate a family"

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