

Women Empowerment towards Social Inclusion

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Abstract

The development of a nation solely depends on the social status of women because it constitutes almost half of societies. Women have been victim of patriarchal attitude of society. Women play major roles in various domain of life like political, social, economical and personal. In spite of her contribution to family, society and country, she is oppressed, neglected, suppressed, depressed, exploited, isolated and victimized by male dominated society. They are often treated in term of their traditional stereotype. Women still suffer from discrimination, and exploitation. Empowerment means decentralization of authority and power. It aims getting participation of deprived section of people in decision making process. Empowerment may mean equal status to women to developed herself and society. Women empowerment looks at basics of women rights. Women empowerment has to be an integral part of any development discourse and inclusion. This paper is based on observation, discussion and fieldwork in the community and neighborhood.

KEYWORDS: Empowerment, Inclusion, Social change, Patriarchal Attitude.

INTRODUCTION

There is plenty of evidence that when women get the opportunity to do hard and typical assignment, they are no less successful in achieving desired goal. Women are fundamental social actors and that they should be integrated fairly into all aspect of society. The climate of blatant lies has been spread about the ability, capacity and sincerity of women in facing the trials and tribunals of mundane life. There are certain ulterior motives behind the deprivation of women from different rights. The Patriarchal approach brazenly misrepresents facts about fortune of women in worldly life. Women produce and nurture children, take care of adults, give pleasure but subordinate to exercise authority. They are excluded from high status and position of power. Lack of opportunity and trust is source of denial to empowerment of women. Women's participation in economic and social activities can make a big difference. The Positive attitude of the family and the society towards women economic activities is the initial state of women empowerment. The focus on empowerment has a direct influence on women's empowerment. Protection and safety of our women in form of empowerment must be a national wide priority. A report of the United Nations says that "women constitute half of the world population, perform nearly two-thirds of work hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one –hundredth per cent of world' property". According to the National Crime Record Bureau, incidence of heinous crime against women increased from two hundred thirty seven per day in 2001 to three hundred thirteen per day in 2015. In this paper, I have tried to explore the ways of inclusion through women empowerment and gone on to illustrate the constitutional provision

related to women. The concept of empowerment prompts us to consider women as an integral part of development and social inclusion. Nothing is as crucial today in national developments as recognition of political, economic and social participation and leadership of women. It is the high time for Indian society to have women at the helm.

Meaning of Empowerment

It means giving voice for voiceless and equal status to women to develop their personality. Empowerment emphasis on freedom, questions established truth and attacked what women see as oppression and exploitation. It provides opportunity to women to develop emotionally, educationally and economically. Empowerment is a process of enhancement of self –confidence and their abilities.

Women empowerment is an attempt; to promote a healthy image of women and girls in society. It also brings radical changes in the stereotypical mindset that overpowers men. The concept of women empowerment has undergone a sea change from welfare oriented approach to equity approach. Empowerment includes control over resources and ideology. It leads to grow greater self-confidence and enables one to overcome external barrier. It is a power to achieve desired goals but not a power over others. Empowerment is a tool for those who are powerless whether they are male or female or group of individuals, class or caste. It is seen as a two way process of increasing participation and reducing or removing barrier that inhibits participation of women.

Significance of Women Empowerment in Personal and Social Structure

There is an urgent need to take a right-oriented approach to the women empowerment. Empowerment can remove the iniquities that slacken the well-being of women. Empirical work in recent years reveal that respect and regard for women's empowerments influenced women's skill to earn independent income. Female bargaining power depends on both their literacy and outside employment. These aspects have in common positive contribution in adding force to women's voice and empowerment. Working outside and earning independent income have impact on enhancing the social standing and status of a women in the household and society. It should be acknowledged that women's empowerment in term of economic independence and social emancipation can have lasting impact on forces and principles that govern division within family and society. There is considerable evidence that women's empowerment within the family can reduce child mortality significantly. Women's education and employment are the two most important influences in reducing high birthrate, constant bearing and rearing produce adverse effect on substantial freedom. It is not surprising that reduction in birth rates have often followed the enhancement of women's status and power.

Constitutional Provision for Women Empowerment

The source of Indian Constitution is the people of India, men and women. The framers of the constitution believed that social, economic and political justice is the ultimate goal to be achieved. One goal of Preamble is the equality status and opportunity to all citizens, which means that men and women should be treated at par in term of equality of status and opportunity. Empowerment in form of gender equality is also enshrined in

Fundamental Right, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principal of State Policies. The primary imperative for women empowerment is rooted in Part-Third (Fundamental Rights) of constitution. Article 14 of constitution of India ensures equality before the law and the equal protection of laws. Article 15 of constitution ensures that the state shall not discriminate only on the grounds of religion, race, sex or place of birth or any of them within the territory of India. Articles 39 and 42 refer to certain principles which provide guidance to the state treating women as equal citizen.

Policies for Women Empowerment

The formative intersection between the ideas of empowerment and women took place during the UN “Decade of women” 1976-85. Equality, Development and peace was slogan that was proposed at International women’s year conference in Mexico-city 1975. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women, laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

National Policy for the Empowerment of women (2001) was a mile stone in the process of women empowerment. The goal of this policy is to bring out the advancement, development and empowerment of women .Main objectives of policy are to enables women to realize their full potential enjoyment of all rights and freedom on equal basis with men in all spheres, equal access to participation and decision making, changing societal attitude and community practice, mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process, building and strengthening partnership with civil society and women organization. In twenty first century, government started many scheme for women societal inclusion and empowerment .The most prominent are as follows-Swashakti project was launched in 1999 and completed in 2005. Swayamsiddha (2001) is an integral scheme for women employment through formation of Self –Help-Groups. The long term objectives of the programme is holistic empowerment of women through sustained process of mobilization.Swadhar Scheme(2001) was initiated for providing relief and rehabilitation for women in difficult circumstances. The Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act came into force in 2006.This act sensitize the husband and his family members for the right of wife. Ladli scheme (2008)-It aims to change the position of the girl kid in the family and community. Scheme also focuses to modify the people’ mindset towards the care of the girl kid and give offer the girl child their birthright as given in Indian constitution. National Mission for Empowerment of Women (2010) –Mission was to strengthen the Overall process that promote all round development of women and facilitate the process of coordinating all the women’s welfare and socio-economic development programme across ministries and departments. Scheme provides a single window service for all programmes run by government for women. Rajiv Gandhi scheme for empowerment of adolescent girls or SABLA –(2010)-The objective of scheme are to enables the adolescent girls for self-development and empowerment through awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition and sexual health. Nirbhaya Fund –Fund is stated to support initiatives by government and NGOs working towards protecting the dignity and ensuring safety of women in India. Nai Roshni—The scheme for leadership development of minority women,2013.This scheme was started in response of Sacher Report that highlighted the fact that India’s largest minority group ,the

Muslim, have been left out of the development. The objective of the scheme is to empower instill confidence among minority women and emboldening them to move out of the confines of their home and community and assert their rights, collectively or individually in term of services, facilities, skill, and opportunities. Beti Bachao, Beti Padho (2015)-The current census (2011) has revealed a declining trend in child sex Ratio between 0-6 years with an all time low of 919. The aim is to generate awareness and improving the efficiency of welfare services meant for women.

Current Issues Related to Women

In the times of globalization and urbanization, the issues related to women have undergone tremendous changes. Despite various protections from constitution, women are facing immense difficulties in family and out of family. New type of crime, deprivation and negative attitudes have emerged in society towards the women. The most common issues are as follows---Prostitution-Women in prostitution should be treated as victim of adverse socio- economic circumstances rather than as offence in our society. Custom-oriented prostitution and gender –oriented prostitution should be viewed as victim of gender –oriented vulnerability. In ordinary parlance the word “Prostitute” mean women who offer her body to indiscriminate sexual intercourse. Prostitution has become indication of poverty and deprivation. Female feticide-India has the legacy of killing the female child. Due to advent of modern technology, feticide has become very easy and cheap .Family of husband and sometimes women herself indulge in such heinous crime .It is cruelty against humanity. Sexual Harassment at work Place: Women empowerment and gender equality include protection from sexual harassment and right to work with dignity. It is universally recognized basic human right. Sexual harassment at work place results in the violation of fundamental rights under constitution, namely right to gender equality and the right to life and liberty. .

Domestic violence: violence against women both in their homes and outside directly linked to disempowerment of women and unequal position in a patriarchal society cutting across both class and community. There are more brutal expression of the widespread phenomenon of domestic violence which includes wife beating, cruelty, torture and humiliation. Domestic violence manifests as verbal, physical or psychological abuse.

Obscenity and indecent representation of women: It is an irony of our society that women have been depicted in the most respectable and aesthetic manner, on the one hand, on the other, they have also been victim of indecent, vulgar and obscene depiction. This contrast is difficult to understand especially where women are treated as “goods” to promote sales.

Termination of pregnancy: Indian society is patriarchal in nature with desire for birth of a male child in the family. This desire leads to indiscriminate abortion of female fetuses.

Talaq: means repudiation of wife by husband in exercise of absolute powers which the law has conferred on him. Husband often used the right of Talaq frequently and unreasonably and out rightly deprived wife all kind of social and financial rights. Provision of Triple Talaq is cruel and demeaning to women integrity. It is a fallacy and misinterpretation of the Quranic law that a Muslim husband enjoys an unbridled authority

to annul the marriage. Among Indian Muslims wrong practices of 'triple Talaq in one' has become debatable in 21st century. It is the symbol of women disempowerment in relation to social life.

Honor killing: Freedom to choose her life –partner according his will is also a kind of empowerment. In the states like Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and other states, Parents and relatives killed newly wedded couples because they violated the traditional custom of cast, religion and Khaps Panchayats. These killings are against the rights and dignity of women.

Deprivation of Biological Instinct

Certain communities like Dawoodi Bohra perform female circumcision, with an idea of reducing sexual pleasure. The world health organization defines female circumcision as all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reason. This practice is being done under a shroud of secrecy and silence. Near about eighty percent of the Bohra girls are subjected to this act of cruelty .It is a violation of both right to life and right to sexual pleasure.

Conclusion

Women empowerment talk about to remove all kind of inequalities in social life. Gender disparity and harassment of women need to be firmly checked with awareness and better implementation of laws. An independent, strong willed and challenger of the status quo woman is the empowered woman. However Haralambos argues that..."Men have a dream of an egalitarian society" so it is impossible to achieve the perfect equality in society but we can try to remove the customs and evil practices inherited in the institution of patriarchy su. Our patriarchal mindset reflects duality and deception of feudal society. We talk about women empowerment but it means a zilch at ground level. A society cannot be civilized if its citizen' behavior towards women is uncivilized. But we should remember that everything in modern world is not the empowerment some false notions of empowerment still prevailed in the name of empowerment such as the nudity propagated as 'my body my right' and sexual commodification of female bodies presented as the liberation of female bodies. Apart from this various ethnic and religious practices considered as wrong and bad such as the purdah system in Islam. So the popular culture is not always right but we should give space to others too.

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