

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH: ILLUSIONS AND REALITIES

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The Fabric of family and society is made of men and women including their own members and people of the social construct. The women segment has been a crucial one regarding the development of a nation in terms of economic, social, religious and political aspect. An attempt is made here to explore the past and present status of women in the context of women empowerment and inclusive growth male dominated society in India. Key factor responsible for male-female discrimination, its implication in respect of inclusive growth have been analysed and examined. Based on the analysis, the police recommendations for interventions have been proposed and recommended.

The study is based on secondary data from books, journals, magazines, news-paper and records of the government department. Average and percentage were calculated to draw inferences.

Empowerment, as the word suggest, is to empower or enable women undertake initiative to do certain things and is most cases it connected women wielding political power. The very concept of empowerment of women, which is based on equality between sexes, is long drawn, conscious and continuous process-comprising enhancement of skills, capacity building, gaining self-confidence and meaningful participation in decision-making. Of all the measures related to empowerment of women employment for women is of central significance. Employment makes the women economically independent. This enhances their ability as decision makes in all walks of life.

Inclusive growth refers to that process of growth, the fruits of which are equitably shared by all section of the society. It happens only when the rate of participation of women as a workforce is raised, particularly in secondary and tertiary sectors of economy and the rate of unemployment among women is reduced. Inclusive progress (experts may name that growth as well as development), a new paradigm of 21st century , cannot get its true shape until or unless the women are given the opportunities to participate freely in all kinds of the realms of the nation's economic and social entrepreneurship.



If we look into the history, the Vedic era was the golden period so far as liberty, equability and dignity of Aryan women are concerned. Women had actively participated with Rishies in intellectual and philosophical discourses. Husband and wife were joint owners of family property. Wife was regarded as an indispensable members of husband's family and proved herself a sincere friend, partner and a guide of her husband. She could move freely to attend fairs, festivals and assemblies of learned persons.

Unfortunately, in post Vedic era and during medieval period, the status and position of women was gradually declined and deteriorated. According to Manu, a women could not enjoy independent status. It was the expectation from a virtuous wife to be obedient to her husband, even if the husband is immoral, a debauch or lacks good qualities or is suffering from physical and mental ailment, wife should worship him like a God. To safeguard the fidelity and chastity of the women, she was deprived of education and confined to the four-walls of the house. Child marriage, Parda-Partha and Sati-Partha became common.

Present Position in India

In India, after independence, the preamble of the constitution and the adoption of the democratic welfare state, conferred various fundamental rights to all Indians irrespective of race, religions and sex. Indian women are the beneficiaries of these rights in the same manner as Indian men. The constitution also promises social and economic justice to women, but the law has not cared to redeem these promises. Women still remain economically weak and socially handicapped. Economic inequality and dependence of women make the promise of economic justice a farce and social justice pretence.

Though, in order to bridge the gap of male-female disparity, every year of **8th March, International Women Day** is celebrated and to make this motion more fruitful but, India celebrate every year as the **National Women's Empowerment Day** since the year 2001 yet, the sex ratio of India is 940 female after 1000 male as per census 2011. It is now 944. Not only is this male-female literacy rate also quite low. The male literacy rate is 82.14% whereas the female literacy rate is 65.46% only.

Despite all this, overall rate of participation in productive activity in the country is about 52.5%. Out of this rate of participation in urban areas is about 73.8% for men and 18.5% for women. In rural areas, it is about 74.7% for men and 29.1% for women. It is also worth mentioning that India's gender development index and gender empowerment measure both are low in comparison to Sri Lanka, China and Indonesia. Pseudo gender equality and empowerment of Indian women is also evident from the fact that their political participation in decision making bodies is very limited.

The talks of women empowerment will be a futile exercise if the social environment remains studded with men-dominating design. If the “**Sukanya Smridhi Khata Yojna**” has received a good amount of progress today(an example of women empowerment through inclusive mechanism) then the another forward step should be taken to keep it up in a sustainable way so that the inclusive growth and women empowerment may walk concomitantly. The real progress emerge in the times to come only when the illusion are rationally scrapped by applying and materializing the present schemes and programs in real sense with administrative as well as women participation audit techniques (governance).

Suggestion:-

The problem of gender in –equality and empowerment of women needs to be dealt with on several fronts. On the legal front, only to enact legislation is not sufficient but there is a need for its implementation with all sincerity and honesty. For the social up-liftment it is not suffice to mobilize not only opining but purposeful action must be done in proper direction. On the cultural front it is imperative to recognise the rich qualities of women and also create an understanding among the various section the society. Besides all this, to reduce economic inequality to provide them social justice, it is suggested that the amount of labour done by housewife must be added to the gross domestic product. Concluding it is essential to up-lift the women through education. It should be considered as their basic human right. Women are in-fact, a vital part of human resource of a country. If education is considered an effective instrument to channelize women power for the national development, the women empowerment inclusive growth objective can easily be achieved.

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