



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

* *Dr. Minoo Raichurkar,*

* *Assistant Professor, Guru Nanak College of Education and Research. Bhandup.*

Abstract:

Women represent half the entire population and one-third of the work force, they earn 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 realise 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.

To come out of this darkness and to prove her worthy Empowering women was the only solution and need of the hour.

Key words: *Awareness, Challenges, Issues, Empowerment of women.*

Copyright © 2023 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial Use Provided the Original Author and Source Are Credited.

INTRODUCTION:

“I raise up my voice — not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard ... we cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.” — Malala Yousafzai

About 50 percent of India's population is only women, which means, this half of the population is needed for the development of the entire country, which is still not empowered and bound by many social constraints. In such a situation, we cannot say that our country can develop in the future without strengthening half of our population.

The need for women empowerment arose because India had gender inequality and was a male

dominated society since ancient times. Women are oppressed by their own family and society for many reasons and face many forms of violence and discrimination in the family and society, not only in India but also in other countries.

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.

To come out of this darkness and to prove her worthy Empowering women was the only solution and need of the hour.

EMPOWERMENT:

Empowerment is the process of increasing the authority and responsibility of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices in to desired actions and outcomes.'

Empowerment is not a technocratic goal—it is a wholesale political commitment. Achieving it requires a long-term process in which all cultural, social, political and economic norms undergo fundamental change. It also requires an entirely new way of thinking—in which the stereotyping of

women and men no longer limits their choices, but gives way to a new philosophy that regards all people as essential agents of change that views development as a process of enlarging the choice of both sexes, just not one.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Women Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social educational, gender or economics strength of individuals and communities of women.

The World bank says, 'Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.'

Empowerment means women must exercise full participation in decision-making process in all walks of life, and full participation with men in all walks of life, and fully participating with men in finding equitable and practical solutions to issues in family and in society. Apart from this empowerment includes women right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Equal relationships between women and men in matters of sexual relations and reproduction including full respect for the integrity of the person, require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility for sexual behaviour and its consequences.

OBSTACLES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROBLEMS AND NEED OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Since ancient times women are facing problems. Their oppression is persistent and universal and its solutions are complicated. Many prophets of



women's emancipation have come and gone, but discrimination against women and violation of human values still persists. Gender issue is basically one that affects women directly or indirectly. In other words, any social evil perpetrated at the cost of women, any law or custom that reinforces and institutionalises women's inferior status in society, or any event or series of events that affects large number of women can be regarded as a gender issue. Gender issues are also those that galvanise large numbers of women into action, any such issues, which catch the attention of women's groups, and subsequently of the media.

- Gender discrimination
- Lack of Women Education
- Female infanticide
- Financial constraint
- Dowry
- Low mobility
- Low need for achievement
- Marriage in same caste and child marriage
- Social status
- Family responsibility

women. Women are deprived of Decision-making power, Freedom of movement, Access to Education, Access to Employment, Exposure to media.

WAYS TO ACHIEVE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

- Changes in women's mobility and social interaction.
- Providing Education that builds a self-image and self confidence among them & develops their ability to think.
- Changes in women's control over resources, decision making.

- Promoting self-employment through credits & training.
- Providing minimum needs like, nutrition, health, sanitation, lean, housing.
- Also, the society should change the mentality of word women and encouraging women to develop herself.

The process of empowerment is multi-dimensional and it enables women to realise 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. Political empowerment, economic development and social upliftment of women are necessary and desirable to fight myriad forms of patriarchal domination, and discrimination at every stage. In fact, women's empowerment is central to the achievement of the triple goals of equality, development and social justice. And for that political participation is needed.

LAWS RELATED TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

- The Maternity Benefit Act 1961
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Equal Remuneration Act 1976
- The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948
- Relevant provisions of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973
- Family Courts Act, 1984



- The Indian Succession Act, 1925
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- The Indian Divorce Act, 1969

SCHEMES OF GOVERNMENT FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA:

Government of India has many schemes for women empowerment. Many of these schemes are related to things like employment, agriculture and health. These schemes are designed keeping in mind the situation of Indian women so as to increase their participation in the society. Some of these main schemes are MGNREGA, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Janani Suraksha Yojana (scheme to reduce maternal mortality) etc.

The following schemes are being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development Welfare and the Government of India for the empowerment of Indian women with the hope that one day women in the Indian society will benefit from every opportunity like men-

BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO YOJANA:

The scheme has been designed keeping in mind female feticide and girl child education. Under this, an attempt is being made to change the mindset of those who consider girls as a burden by planning for the betterment of girls and giving them financial assistance.

WOMEN HELPLINE SCHEME:

Under this scheme women are provided 24 hours emergency helpline, women can report any kind of violence or crime on the prescribed number under this scheme. Under this scheme, women can register

their complaints by dialing 181 number across the country.

UJJWALA YOJANA:

This scheme has been launched to protect women from trafficking and sexual exploitation. Along with this work is also done under it for their rehabilitation and welfare.

SUPPORT TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR WOMEN (STEP):

Under the STEP scheme, work is done to enhance the skills of women so that they too can get employment or start their own employment. Under this programme, women are imparted education in various fields like agriculture, horticulture, handloom, tailoring and fisheries.

WOMEN'S POWER CENTER:

The scheme focuses on empowering rural women through community participation. Under this community volunteers like students and professionals inform rural women about their rights and welfare schemes.

RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN PANCHAYATI RAJ SCHEMES:

In 2009, India's Union Cabinet announced 50 percent reservation for women in panchayati raj institutions, an attempt by the government to improve the social status of women in rural areas. Through which a large number of women were elected Gram Panchayat Presidents in Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh as well as other states.

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



ERJ



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.

With this I would like to end with a beautiful line which says..

“The Empowered Women is Beautiful Beyond Measure and Beautiful Beyond Description”.

REFERENCE:

Shiva,K.L.(N.A). A Study of Issues and Challenges in Empowerment of Women Through Their Participation in the Panchayat Raj Institution:

A Case Study of Allahabad District of Uttar Pradesh. Department of Economics University of Allahabad : U.P

Mishara, A. D.(2006). Women empowerment: issues and challenges. Indian journal of public administration. Vol. Lx, no. 3, July-September 2014.

Vignesh.(N.A).WomenEmpowerment.www.sildeshare.net/26244623/byvignesh?related1.

<http://www.preservearticles.com/201107068954/essay-on-womens-empowerment-challenges-and-prospects.html>

<http://www.narendramodi.in/gu/womens-empowerment/>

<http://gujarati.webdunia.com/article/gujarati-business-news/>.

http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/9845/16/16_chapter%20pdf

Cite This Article:

*** Dr. Raichurkar M., (2023). Women Empowerment in India: Issues and Challenges, *Educreator Research Journal*, Volume–X, Issue– II, March –April 2023, 121-125.**