

GENDER EQUALITY: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT- AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

A new human rights includes gender equality, which applies to all persons irrespective of their gender, caste, creed to live with dignity and with freedom. Gender equality is also a primary condition for all sort of development and reducing poverty and to take all the deprived in to the main stream. An empowered women make a valuable contribution to the improvement of health conditions and educational status and productivity of whole families and communities, which is percolated in turns to improve prospects for the next generation. An easy access to resources is important for economic freedom of women as freedom of movement is associated with their economic independence and also animates with power and expands agency.

The Millennium Development aim also puts attention on gender equality and empowerment of women. Gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental cornerstones for achieving development results is now accepted by worldwide regime. Keeping the status of women empowerment and its determinants in India, in this paper an attempt will be made to present some of the key determinants of inequalities and remedial action will be suggested to overcome it and will be proven how it relates with the new human rights.

Gender equality will be gained only when men and women enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. This means sharing equally, power and having equal opportunities in economic and social spheres. Equal claim on education and career prospects will enable women to realize their personal strong desire. Gender equality wants the empowerment of women strongly, with a on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own spotlight. When women are empowered, the whole family benefited thus benefiting the society as a whole and these benefits often have long lasting affirmative effects on future generations.

Key Words: Women, Empowerment, Human, Equality, Benefits

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality will be gained only when women and men appreciate or benefited the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. The meaning of the above is power and influence should be shared equally, and having equal opportunities in all social and economic spheres. Career prospects and equal claim on education will facilitate to enhance their personal ambitions. For empowerment of women there should be greater equality at all level with a main concentration on defining and redefining the power imbalances and giving more autonomy women so that they can manage their own lives. Whole family is benefited on empowerment of a single woman of that family and this benefits often have a Gender equality demands the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. When women are empowered, the whole family benefit, thus benefiting the society as a whole and these benefits often have a series effect towards future generations.

¹According to Census-2011, India has reached the population of 1210 million, as against 301 million in 1951, of which 58,64,69,174 (48.5 %) were females. The population of India accounted for 17.5% of the total world population and occupied second place. The sex ratio was 930 in 1971 and it has increased to 940 according to 2011 Census.

The female literacy also increased from 18.3% in 1961 to 74.0% in 2011 and a decrease in male-female literacy gap from 26.6% in 1981 to 16.7 per cent in 2011. Women empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (rural/urban), educational status, social status (caste and class) and age. Policies on women empowerment exist at national, state and local levels in many sectors including health, education, economic opportunities, gender based violence and political participation. The scope and coverage of the schemes launched has been expanding that include initiatives for economic and social empowerment of women and for securing gender equality.

¹ https://www.worldwidejournals.com/global-journal-for-research-analysis-GJRA/special_issues_pdf/September_2017_1507115725_62.pdf

WHY NEED OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT?

As far as the “ Vedas Purana” of Indian culture is concern, women is being admired such as LAXMI MAA, goddess of wealth; SARSWATI MAA, for wisdom; DURGA MAA for power. The status of women in India specially in rural areas required to be address the issue of empowering women. About 69% of the female population in rural area is unrealized. This is mainly due to prevailing social customs in the society. 85% of total work force in rural area are contributed by women in agriculture and animal care. Almost half of the population constituted by women and perform nearly 2/3 of its work hours, receive 1/10th of the universe income and possesses less than 1/ 100th the universe property.

24“Among the world’s 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men two to one. 70% of people living in poverty are women. Lower sex ratio i.e. 933, The existing studies show that the women are relatively less healthy than men though belong to same class. They constitute less than 1/7th of the administrators and mangers in developing countries. Only 10% seats in World Parliament and 6% in National Cabinet are held by women.”

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FIELDS.

To serve for the empowerment of women and to achieve greatest contribution Greater participation of women in social and political sphere is essential to make the social and political institutions more number of representation. It serves as a tool for empowerment of women and contributes to gender sensitive decision making. As far as political participation is concerned, women have a insufficient number of representation in Lok Sabha in India , Rajya Sabha and also in State Assemblies. A total of 69 females have been elected in the General Election 2014 constituting only 12% share in the Lok Sabha, where as in the Rajya Sabha only 13.2% representatives are women at present. Similarly, women representation in the state assemblies and state councils is not satisfactory . On an average, in the states, women share is only 9% in assemblies and only 5% in State Councils as on 1st September 2014.

Due to the reservation of one-third seats for women in all shapers of the Panchayati Raj representation of women in the has increased to 46.7% as on 1st March 2013. As far as womens participation in the judiciary is concerned, there were only 2 women judges out of 30 judges in the Supreme Court and only 58 women judges out of 609 judges in different High Courts with maximum 25% in Delhi High Court and no women judge in 6 High Courts as on 1st April 2014 (Women and Men in India, 2014

Women's Representation in Parliament in India (1952-2009)

Year	Total Seats	Women Contestants	Lok Sabha		Rajya Sabha			
			Seats won by Women	%age of Total Seats won by Women	Winning Percentage of Women	Total Seats	Women Members	%age
1952	489	-	-	-	-	219	16	7.31
1957	494	45	22	4.45	48.89	237	18	7.59
1962	494	66	31	6.27	46.97	238	18	7.56
1967	520	67	29	5.57	43.28	240	18	8.33
1971	518	86	21	4.05	24.41	243	20	7.00
1977	542	70	19	3.50	27.14	244	17	10.25
1980	542	143	28	5.16	19.58	244	25	9.84
1984	542	162	42	7.74	25.93	244	24	11.48
1989	543	198	29	5.34	14.64	245	28	9.80
1991	543	326	37	7.10	11.35	245	24	15.51
1996	543	599	40	7.36	6.68	223	38	8.52
1998	543	274	43	7.91	15.69	245	19	6.12
1999	543	284	49	9.02	17.25	245	15	7.76
2004	543	355	45	8.29	12.67	245	28	11.42
2009	543	556	59	10.82	10.61	245	21	8.57

<https://www.gapjournals.org/>

² <http://iosrjournals.org/iosr-ibm/papers/Vol17-issue4/Version-1/B017411319.pdf>

Source: <http://indiacurrentaffairs.org/women-in-parliament.susheel>, May 5, 2012; and Dr. Rajendra B. Doddamani, "Empowerment of Women in Indian Politics," Third Concept, Vol. 24, No. 279, May 2010, p. 26.

Table No 1

³The above table reveals that though women constitute about half of the electorate, yet their representation remained between 3.50 and 10.82 percent in Lok Sabha and between 6.12 and 15.51 percent in Rajya Sabha from 1952 to 2009, which is a matter of great concern. It may be mentioned here that the representation of women in Lok Sabha has increased slightly after 1996 and in the present 15th Lok Sabha, it is the highest even (10.9 percent) It is also evident from the table that the number of women contestants is also very less in comparison to men. No

doubt, women contestants have generally increased from election to election especially after 1996, but the winning percentage of the women has decreased. The winning percentage was 48.89 percent in 1957 which has decreased to 10.61 percent in 2009. The increase in the women

contestants and their representation in Lok Sabha after 1996 may be attributed to the reservation of seats for women in PRIs and urban local 142 bodies in accordance to the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments. The reservation of seats for women in PRIs and urban local bodies has attracted the attention of women folk towards politics and the male leaders have also now started recognizing women as an important segment of electoral politics.

ISSUES TO BE TACKLED FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

Through the above discussion it focus light that there is discrimination and marginalization of women in India at every stage of their lives irrespective of economic opportunity, social participation and access to education or access to any resources available in the society. In India majority of women are poor, unemployed and uneducated and untrained. They often end up in the daily struggle of managing an ill equipped family and are not in a position to propel out themselves of the oppressive and regressive socio-economic conditions. In India the situation very worst as lots of things are happening and or huge amount of resources are being spent in the name of women empowerment in India, the actual situation however, just remains the same and in many thing worsens further. Deep-rooted effective challenges are still remaining to be achieved ⁴The following are some of the important issues to be tackled for women's empowerment and gender equality in India. Eliminating gender differences in access to education and educational attainment are key elements on the path to attaining gender equality and reducing the disempowerment of women. Education, particularly higher education of women, is a key enabler of demographic change, family welfare, and better health and nutrition of women and their families. Special measures should be taken to create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrollment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/ vocation/ technical skills by women.

- Child marriage, which is still active in our society, and the same must be prevented and not encouraged the culprit. This is because an early age at marriage of women is an indicator of the low status of women in society and also curtails women's access to education.
- A woman required to be healthy physically and mentally so that she is able to take challenges and fight for equal status in the society. Women must have access to comprehensive, affordable and quality health care.
- The training programmes for women in agriculture and other related activities should be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.
- Must provide Financial Independence by Employment, particularly for cash and in the formal sector. She should get appropriate and proper wages and work at par with men so as to evaluate their status in the society.
- There should be no violence against women and the same must be abolished from the society. Apart from strict legislative provision should be made in respect of the violence against women can only be tackled through a change in attitude that needs to take place in the family, in the society and the female members of the society as well. Gender sensitization and gender training programmes are also important.
- Women's representation in the legislature an indicator of women empowerment. political participation has been considered a major measure of women's empowerment. Women's representation . The scenario of in India is very poor in this regards.

³ https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/128015/16/09_chapter%204.pdf

⁴ https://www.worldwidejournals.com/global-journal-for-research-analysis-GJRA/special_issues_pdf/September_2017_1507115725_62.pdf

- Moreover, women's empowerment cannot take place unless women come together and decide to self-empower themselves. Women should come together as a unifying force and initiate self empowering actions at the ground level.

CONCLUSION

As one half population is constituted by women. without their active engagement and participation their empowerment and economic growth is no possible or it can out of question. Women Empowerment of utmost value for economic growth to be really inclusive. It is crucial for achieving sustainable economic development of our country and even beyond. Still a large part of women do not have sufficient autonomy regarding the value choices for their own life. The data also revealed that there is a necessity to look beyond economic resources or material prosperity and into cultural and social influence , which are playing a role in shaping the women's autonomy and empowerment. Along with government, civil society organisations and all other stake holders must come forward and involve in the women empowerment process is the need of the hour.