



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

DARSHANA SHARAD BHAGAT
M.COM, M.A (E-CO)
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
ARST, COMMERCE, SCIENCE
COLLEGE NARAYANGAON
TAL - JUNNAR DIST-PUNE

DR. PRASHANT SURESH SALAVE
HOD (DAPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)
RESEARCH GUIDE,
BABUJI AVHADH
MAHAVIDYALAYA,PATHARDI
DIST-AHAMADNAGAR

Abstract

Empowerment as a methodology is often associated with feminism. The subject of empowerment of women has becoming a burning issue all over the world including India since last few decades. It is held that women now cannot be asked to wait for any more for equality. In other words, "Empowerment is not giving people power; people already have plenty of power, in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation, to do their jobs magnificently. Empowerment occurs through improvement of conditions, standards, events, and a global perspective of life. The status of Women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennium. In early Vedic period Women enjoyed equal status with men. Rigved & Upanishads mention several names of women sages and seers notably Gargi & Maitrey. However later the status of women began to deteriorate approximately from 500 B.C., the situation worsened with invasion of Mughals and later on by European invaders. Feminist activism picked up momentum in India during later 1970's. Later on Many groups and NGO's have been working for the Empowerment of women. We are proud that in India Women got voting right much before USA and some other European countries.

Introduction:

Scholars believe that in ancient India, the women enjoyed equal status with men in all fields of life. Works by ancient Indian grammarians such as Patanjali and Katyayana suggest that women were educated in the early Vedic period. Rigvedic verses suggest that the women married at a mature age and were probably free to select their husband Woman is the leader planner of the family, the first trainer; supplier of labour power and by playing focal role in the development of agriculture, industry, service sector, socio-culture etc., creates a civilized society. Women contribute directly or indirectly for economic development. Though the nature has given the genetic power of reproduction especially to the women, the socio-economic status of women is so poor and the incidence of poverty is more on woman only. Empowering women is the only solution for all questions. Her potential hidden power is to be utilized for which, her status in the society must be improved and economically she should be strengthened. The poverty is the main cause for her low bargaining power hence poverty should be removed. Empowering women and



removal of poverty go hand in hand. Woman if educated and empowered, her potential power can be utilized for the economic development”

Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people, either directly by those people, or through the help of non-marginalized others who share their own access to these opportunities. It also includes uneasy attempts to deny those opportunities. Empowerment also includes encouraging, and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency, with a focus on eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals of the group. This process can be difficult to start and to implement effectively. Inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women have also been age-old issues all over the world. Thus, women’s quest for equality with man is a universal phenomenon. People who lack self-sufficiency become, at a minimum, dependent on charity, or welfare. They lose their self-confidence because they cannot be fully self-supporting. The opportunities denied them also deprive them of the pride of accomplishment which others, who have those opportunities, can develop for themselves. This in turn can lead to psychological, social and even mental health problems.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the scenario of status of women and efforts made in past and present
2. To study the necessity of empowerment of women and
3. To know the available schemes for women empowerment in India

Review of literature

The empowerment of women is one of the central issues in the process of development of countries all over the world. The International Women’s Day celebrated on 8th March every year has become a day of demonstration for equal opportunity and solidarity. But the question arises how relevant is celebration of Women’s Day in view of the fact that their position in the society has not changed much. They are still treated as the „weaker sex“ who needs to be protected entire life-be it by her father, husband or son. The New Age Women“ and the „Women of Substance“ in true terms are just words in books. Women constitute about half of the total population of country but they suffer from many disadvantages as compared to men in terms of literacy rates, labour participation rates earnings. Social, economic and political empowerment is the need of the day, as it is one only surest way of making women “equal partners in development”. The process of women empowerment is conceptualized in terms of personal assertions, self-esteem and confidence, ability to protect themselves as women attaining socio-political participation and economic independence, ownership of productive assets and provide leadership in women.



Women in India

The status of women is changing from time to time. The history of women in India has been exciting. Over the past few millennia, the status of women in India has been subject to many changes. Women enjoyed equal status with men in all fields of life in ancient days of India. Works by ancient Indian grammarians such as Patanjali and Katyayana point out that, women were educated in the early Vedic period. The Rigvedic verses tell that, the women married at a mature age and were free to select their life partner. Rig Veda and Upanishads, the holy books mention that, There were many women sages and seers, like Gari and Maitreyi. Stri. Dharma Paddhati, the text of Tryambakayajvan reflects the role of women and tells that, women were enjoined to be of service to their husbands". In some kingdoms of ancient India, tradition like Nagar Vadhu i.e bride of the city was practiced. Amrapali was the famous Nagar Vadhu. Women were competing to win the popular title of the „Nagar Vadhu“. During the early Vedic Period women enjoyed equal position and rights. Later around 500 B.C the position of women started to decline with the Manusmiti and with the Mughal invasion of Babur and the Mughal empire and later Christianity cut the freedom and rights of women. Even though penitentiary movements like Jainism allowed women to be admitted to the religious order by and large, the women in India faced captivity and restrictions. Around sixth century, the practice of child marriages started.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA .

The empowerment is an aid to help women to achieve equality with men or, at least, to reduce gender gap considerably. Without empowerment certain social roles cannot be performed. Women play a distinct role in the economic development. She is the chief architect of family, the first teacher; supplier of labour power and by playing main role in the development of agriculture, industry, service sector, socioculture etc. creates a civilized society. In the visible and invisible form women contribute for economic development. The nature has given the biological power of reproduction especially to the women. She can create social, cultural and economic wonders. Even then the socio-economic status of women is so poor. Often the women are victimized in the cases like rape, dowry harassments, sexual harassments, kidnapping, female infanticides and sex selective abortions, domestic violence, trafficking, etc. The verdicts of many of such cases go against women because of the non-availability of witness, discontinuation of suits, difficulty of proving the incidents etc. Hence she should be strengthened and her status should be improved; she should be physically, mentally, economically, socially, politically and culturally strengthened so that the country can make use of hidden potential power for the economic development.

Therefore empower the women. It is the man who has to take initiative for women empowerment. The efforts for the upliftment of conditions of Indian women have been noticed before and after British rule in India.



Reasons for the empowerment of women

The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. (Article 42). Today we have noticed different Acts and Schemes of the central government as well as state government to empower the women of India. But in India 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 be economically 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 par with men. Other hand, it has been observed that women are found to be less literate than men. According to 2011 census, rate of literacy among men in India is found to be 82.14% whereas it is only 64.46% among women. Thus, increasing education among women is of very important in 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 health 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 these reasons, they require empowerment of all kinds in order to protect themselves and to secure their purity and dignity. To sum up, women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves. There is a need to formulate reducing feminized poverty, promoting education of women, and prevention and elimination of violence against women.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The government of India has been trying to empower the women through various schemes some of schemes related to women empowerment in India are-Creches/Day Care Centres for the children of working and ailing mothers. Swayamsidh, Swa-Shakti Project, Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Swawalamban, Hostels for working women, Swadhar, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Self Help Groups (SHGs) etc. In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD-1985) and the National Commission for Women (NCW) have been worked to Women Empowerment in India: A Brief Discussion safeguard the rights and legal entitlement of women. The 73rd &74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided some special powers to women that for reservation of seats (33%), whereas the report HRD as March2002 shows that the legislatures



with the highest percentage of women are Sweden 42.7%, Denmark 38%, Finland 36% and Iceland 34.9%. In India „The New Panchayati Raj „ is the part of the effort to empower women at least at the village level. The government of India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights to women. These CEDAW (1993), the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for Action (1995) and other such instruments. The year of 2001 was observed as the year of women’s empowerment. During the year, a landmark document has been adopted, „the National Policy for the empowerment of women.“ For the beneficiaries of the women, the government has been adopted different schemes and programs i.e. the National Credit Fund for Women (1993), Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Information and Mass Education (IME) etc. The most positive development last few years has been the growing involvement of women in the Panchayati Raj institutions. There are many elected women representatives at the village council level. At present all over India, there are total 20, 56, 882 laces Gaon panchayat members, out of this women members is 8, 38, 244 (40.48%), while total Anchalik panchayat members is 1, 09, 324, out of this women members is 47, 455, (40.41%) and total Zilaparishad members is 11, 708, out of this women members is 4, 923 (42.05%). At the central and state levels too women are progressively making a difference.

Conclusion:

“There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing.”-Swami Vivekananda. The concept of empowerment flows from the power. It is vesting where it does not exist or exist inadequately. Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant, have positive esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in development activities. The empowered women should be able to participate in the process of decision making. The male female ratio though improved over last few years is still far from satisfactory. It is 940 women per 1000 men for India in some states it is as much lower as 877. These are the states where female feticide is maximum. The female literacy rate is also lower than the male literacy rate. The ground reality is deprivation, degradation and exploitation of women specially women from rural areas and those belonging to deprived sectors of the society. The Urban elite class women have no d Gender equality and women's empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the progress that has been made, six out of ten of world's poorest people are still women and girls, less than 16 percent of the world's parliamentarians are women, two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and, both in times of armed conflict and behind closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence. Women empowerment connotes Economic Empowerment which implies a better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods owned and



managed by women, "social empowerment" which means a more equitable social status for women in society, "Legal Empowerment" "that suggests the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women's empowerment and "Political Empowerment" means a political system favoring the participation in, and control by women of the political decision making process and in governance.oubt been benefitted by the efforts of women empowerment Gender equality and women's empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Despite the progress that has been made, six out of ten of world's poorest people are still women and girls, less than 16 percent of the world's parliamentarians are women, two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and, both in times of armed conflict and behind closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence. Women empowerment connotes Economic Empowerment which implies a better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods owned and managed by women, "social empowerment" which means a more equitable social status for women in society, "Legal Empowerment" "that suggests the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women's empowerment and "Political Empowerment" means a political system favoring the participation in, and control by women of the political decision making process and in governance.

A challenge of 21st century writes —Women are being brutalized, Commoditized, materialized and subjected to 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. Efforts by the Government are on to ensure Gender equality but 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 inhuman exploitation and discrimination.

References

1. Bright, Pritom Singh Competition Refresher, August, 2010,
2. Hasnain, Nadeem---Indiansociety and Culture, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors, 2004
3. Kar, P. K---Indian Society, Kalyani Publishers, 2000, Cuttack.
4. Kidwai, A. R ---(edt)Higher Education, issues and challenges, Viva Books, 2010,,
5. Rao Shankar, C. N --- Indian Society.
6. www.wcd.nic.in/empwomen.htm
7. www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/. /womens-empowerment-principles
8. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment>
9. www.undp.org/content/undp/en/. /womenempowerment/overview.html
10. www.womens-empowerment.org/
11. Women empowerment in India: a study R., H. Waghmode and J. L. Kalyan, Reviews of Literature • Volume 1 Issue 7• Feb2014
12. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 2, Issue 6, June 2012