

Women Empowerment in India

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ABSTRACT

Women Empowerment has come forth as an important matter of contention in recent times. The economic empowerment of women is being considered these days as a Sine-qua-non of progress for a country; hence, the issue of economic empowerment of women is of headmost important to political sophists, social scientists and wave makers. This article looks at the empowerment avenue in relation to issues of women and their development.

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INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is a procedure to increase efficacy and make preeminent use of each and every individual's contribution. It indicates synergy (combined efforts)-the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts. In this article, it has been emphasized on women empowerment with special reference to India.

Of the 1.3 billion people who live in utter poverty across the world, 70% are women. For the women, poverty does not mean just dearth of desires, it means rights denied, opportunities curtailed, voices silenced and so on. The overpowering majority of the labor that maintain life-grow food, cooking, raising children, caring for the elderly, maintaining a house, hauling water- is done by the women and worldwide this work is endowed low status and pay.

For developing a better society, Education is one of the most important factor. In India, women who are educated are less than those who are deprived from schooling. In this

direction Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has tried to break down the barriers in the way of advancement of women in India. He laid down the foundation of concrete and sincere efforts by developing the common civil code for the Hindus and the principle is capable of enlargement to other sections of Indian society.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

- To elevate women's social status by permitting them to attain control over their own health and development matters.
- To sustain and defend the physical and mental health of women by providing health information and advice.
- To aid women of rural area for adopting within the commune.
- To diminish the crime rate against women juvenile and children.
- To work as a agitator between all sections of the society in empowering women and to axis innovative initiatives through self help groups.
- To capacitate women so much so that they can participate not only in decision making procedures but also in the planning and execution too.

WOMEN EMPOWERING PROCESS

As defined by, IFAD evaluation, following are the 4 main elements; that could lead to women's empowerment:

- Changes in women's labor patterns
- Changes in women's mobility and social interaction

- Changes in women's access to and control over resources
- Changes in women's control over decision-making.

CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS PROVIDED TO WOMEN

Article 25 of the Indian constitution charter all the freedom. The reforms introduced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar through "Hindu Code-Bill" have been accepted by all. Prior to Hindu Succession Act 1956 and Hindu Marriage Act 1955 the Hindu law was disorganised in a large extent, through Hindu women's Right to Property Act, 1937 was the subject of legislative interruption. Bill was a part of social engineering via law. It was a first step towards the recognition and empowerment of women in India.

The Hindu Code Bill introduced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the constituent assembly on 11-4-1947. A debate on this Bill continued for more than 4 years and still remains inconclusive. The doctrine prevailed upon the reforms.

POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The political empowerment is necessary for all round development of the women, but as the case of dalit politicians and legislators all efforts have proved nugatory. It proves that without academic and social education the political empowerment of women in certain parts of India is impracticable. In panchayati Raj setup, the uneducated women are subject to exploitation at the hands of government mechanism.

LEGISLATIVE POWERS TO WOMEN

Empowerment of women does not only mean redeeming the rights of women belonging to the different sections of the society but also the actions should be addressed towards all round development of each and every section of Indian women by giving appropriate share. There are lots of nodal agencies including the National Commission for Women working for women welfare apart from government efforts.

The Indian government has introduced various legislations to safeguard the Constitutional rights to women. These legislative measures include:

- Hindu Marriage Act (1955)
- Hindu Succession Act (1956)
- Dowry Prohibition Act (1961)
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971)
- Child Marriage Restraint Act (1976)
- Immoral Trafficking (prevention) Act (1986)
- Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique (regulation and prevention of measure) Act (1994)

Apart from these, various welfare measures have been adopted up by the government from time to time to empower the women. They are:

- Employment Programme (1987)
- Mahila Samridhi Yozana (1993)
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (1992-93)
- Indira Mahila Yozana (1995)
- Balika Samridhi Yozana (1997)

However, there still exists a huge difference between the goals established by Constitutional Policies, Plans and Programmes and the factual reality of women.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Earlier women concentrated only on traditional activities; but due to spread of education, favourable government policies towards development of women entrepreneurship, women have changed their mental outlook and deflected towards nontraditional activities too. Women participation may be found in the following fields:

- Agriculture
- Horticulture
- Sericulture
- Dairying
- Animal husbandry

- Fisheries
 - Handicrafts
 - Beedi industry
 - Tailoring
 - Garment industry
 - Pottery
 - Blacksmith industry
 - Doll making
 - Fancy items
 - Bee keeping
- Jewellery
 - Beauty-parlour
 - Printing textiles
 - Electronics
 - Chemicals
 - Food processing
 - Nursery
 - Baby crèche centers
 - Stationery etc.

Women work participation rate (%)

state	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Assam	18.92	21.22	24.91
Manipur	30.34	29.87	33.58
Meghalaya	32.13	36.54	41.59
Mizoram	21.23	20.45	23.61
Nagaland	23.78	25.12	27.05
Tripura	36.67	37.67	38.64
Arunachal Pradesh	36.43	35.44	40.33
Other states & UTs	45.65	46.41	48.81

(Source: MGNREGA MIS Report of 2007-12.)

CONSTRAINTS FACING WOMEN

- Women might not have a full awareness of the economic environment in which they have to work.
- Women might not be in a spot to utilize all resources required to successfully manage and control a specific environment exercise.
- There might be social and cultural hurdles to women involvement in a particular economic activity.
- There might not be sufficient obligation within the community for economic activity managed by women.

- Small Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India
- District Industrial Center
- Development of Women and Children in Rural areas
- Integrated Rural Development Programme
- Prime minister Rozgaryozna
- Women’s Corporate Finance Corporation
- Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment
- National Backward Classes Finance And Development Corporation
- National SafaiKaramchari

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Following are the list of government and non-government agencies and programmes for the promotion of women entrepreneurship:

- Federation of societies of women entrepreneurship

Even after establishing above mentioned programmes women are still facing difficulties in getting loans from banks and financial institutions. Women experience ample difficulties than men in the startup stage with family problems, collateral security, professional

disrespect, lack of technical training and marketing.

A recent survey reveal the percentages of women entrepreneurs in various states of India, as follows

Women entrepreneurship in India

States	Number of units registered	Number of women entrepreneurs	Percentage (%)
Tamil Nadu	9618	2930	30.36
Uttar Pradesh	7980	3180	39.84
Kerala	5487	2135	38.91
Punjab	4791	1618	33.77
Maharashtra	4339	1394	32.12
Gujarat	3872	1538	39.72
Karnatka	3822	1026	26.84
Madhya Pradesh	2967	842	28.38
Other states & UTs	14567	4185	28.71
Total	57,452	18,848	32.82

It is visible from the above table that women lack far behind in terms of entrepreneurship in India, which require an urge for proper strategy in this regard.

STRATEGY REQUIRED FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- The government policy creators have to emend strategies on women education and their entrepreneurship development.
- Women should be made acquainted about various credit facilities, financial incentives and subsidies.
- To make women entrepreneurship development rational, a stable support is required.
- To increase the skills required for employment opportunities for women especially below poverty line.

CONCLUSION

To sum up it can be said that women empowerment has the power to modify many social issues and even the country. Through women empowerment, the possibility of converting male dominated country into equally dominated country of rich economy is 101% possible. But this revolutionary empowerment require the firm foundation of education among women in which India is still lacking. As female literacy rate has improved from 8.9% in 1951 to 65.5% in 2011, but still it is below the world average 79.7%.

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