

Socio-Economic Issues of Women in Contemporary India

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ABSTRACT: Women, in India, in general have never been allowed to fully blossom and putting their just part in the socio economic development. Their potential has always been undermined, disvalued and neglected. So making women more progressive, this is the time to unleash the 'hidden entrepreneurial capabilities' of women. Economically secure women will no less than a fountain of resource to the nation which will bring more employment opportunities, more gross domestic product and more financial inclusion to the system. Women entrepreneurship can certainly strike some core issues of social indignity like the 'patriarchal mindset', it can lessen the 'domestic violence' against women, it can also improve 'maternal -infant healthcare' system, as presence of such issues in 21st century is really a misfortune to live with. Plus an economic status of women leads to the betterment of her social status also. An empowered woman can improve the environment of awareness, as today most of the women's rights are not in vogue because the awareness level is way below .why society is giving a secondary stance to women in labor and business activities? Why they have been taught to follow rather than lead? A nation can be called a developed one only when the women is getting equal opportunities in financial matters, is getting proper social representation and her dignity is duly taken care of.

KEYWORDS: Empowered Women, Financial Inclusion, Dignity, Women Entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION:

***"We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back."* —Malala Yousafzai**

Indian society, being a male dominated society heavily lacks women participation in workforce and gross domestic product. Currently startups

are totally male dominated. Only 6% of all startups are run by women. Many reasons contribute to this deficiency like Patriarchal society, extra attachment to traditional values, Lack of education ,lack of vocational skills, Lack of funding, difficulty in availing loans, poor

institutional support to build and guide in business expansion. This whole poor picture can also be justified by structural factors. Early marriage culture deviate women from getting higher education and force them to leave their home. now women again is deprived of her choice where in-laws pressurize them not to work and she is left limited to only household activities. The informal face of Indian economy is also a factor of women exploitation which makes women afraid of active participation. Regular sexual crimes against women also restrict women participation. Unjust Wage parity, outdoor working ethics and social Discrimination also obstructs their participation. Somehow Choice of work is not offered to Women. Maternal issues are also there, which hinders women's initiative. Plethora of reason is there still, these reasons must not overshadow the real potential of women in total because if opportunities are there women are always eager to grab them. Just to understand the current scenario it is very important to flash a light over the economic reforms of 1991. Indian economy was

reassembled in 1991, but hardly any structural reform was witnessed in women's side .growth was there, no doubt but we have seen a jobless growth. To increase more opportunities economic growth was needed. Our growth was not sufficient to create more opportunities for women, whatever opportunities are there were grabbed by men.

Some insightful Measures we need to suffocate this gender asymmetry in entrepreneurship.

-We have to install customized window services for supporting startup procedures especially suiting the women needs. More Conducive awareness programs with the help of civil society and NGOs to kill stereotyped mindsets in the society should be channelized. Ensuring more and more safety and security to women at all organizational levels is needed which can strengthen the voice of women to take strong stand in adversities.

-Giving some special attraction to women in skill development to foster

the present day commercial benefits through skill India mission.

- Bigger incentives should be given to women in establishing MSMEs, and providing cheap and liberal term loans.

- Some Tax breaks should be arranged for women enterprises.

- Least capital gains tax should be imposed on VC and ACs who invest in women startups.

- Creation of some special fund by government to promote women entrepreneurship.

What should be done in long run?

1) Programs to increase the number of women who take up higher education and technical education (schemes like Pragati and Udaan are steps in the right direction)

2) Vocational training to women.

3) Creation of an environment which enable them to pursue entrepreneurship (safety, encouragement, rewards)

4) Educating the society to change their mindset and value the organizational skills of women and provide them

freedom to contribute towards economic growth of the country.

What is women empowerment?

Women empowerment means freedom of women from the vicious grips of social, economical, political, caste and gender-based discrimination. It means granting women the power and freedom to make life choices. It means replacing patriarchy with parity. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to building stronger economies; achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability. In this regard, there are various facets of women empowerment, such as given here under:—

1. Individual empowerment - A woman is a being with senses, imagination and thoughts; she should be given a proper environment to express them freely.

2. Social Empowerment—society as a whole, belongs to women same as to any privileged men. There should be no place for concepts like 'gender' and the onus comes on state to promote gender

equality. Gender equality is something in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

3. Educational Empowerment - empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence is the need of hour. This will help women to get aware of their rights and will cultivate a healthy morale to claim them.

4. Economic empowerment – In India it literally means to get rid of financial dependence from their male counterparts. This economic subjugation leads to social subjugation.

5. Legal Empowerment –it speaks of a comprehensive legal structure which is sensitive of women rights. It should be based on rule of law, not the rule of land.

6. Political Empowerment – a participative political system should be there, which is inclusive in all means of social representations. Women can lead only when the decision making opportunities are given to them in government and legislative branch.

Position of Women in India now and then:

A much prestigious position was enjoyed by women in the Rig- Vedic period which was further deteriorated in the later civilizations. Women were denied almost every freedom, they were denied of property ownership and inheritance, they were denied of education, remarriage, spouse selection, social movement etc. these all discriminations further evolved into much grave biased rituals like child marriage, dowry system and Sati Pratha .British period witnessed many changes in women's empowerment. Educated Indians started advocating their cause. social reformers such as Mahatma Gandhi ,Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Jyotirao Phule started pan India agitations for the upliftment of women. Their agitations led to the abolition of Sati and formulation of the Widow Remarriage Act .This way the status of women in social, economic and political life began to elevate.

Current Scenario on Women Empowerment:



After independence, constitution of India provided many liberal ideas for women empowerment; many social, economic and political provisions were incorporated. Women nowadays can participate in almost every sector like education, politics, sports, media, art and culture, science and technology. But still there are some remnants of patriarchal mentality like victimization, humiliation, torture and exploitation. These seven decades after Independence, could not bring such a phenomenal change which can be proud of. However there is no denial that an era of multifarious opportunities has started and any ambitious woman can take a leap on.

Spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda quoted that, ***“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved, and it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.”*** Thus, in order to achieve the status of a developed country, India needs to transform its colossal women force into an effective human resource and this is possible only through the role enhancement of women in financial structure of our social system. South

Korea has encouraged women participation at higher positions which in turn automatically improved their status at lower levels. This country also provided incentives to companies which are gender friendly. India must read such lessons. Plus we need to shatter some myths like if more women come to workforce they will fail both sides, their domestic as well as entrepreneurial. This is grossly underestimated notion as if a woman can manage her home very well; she is naturally having good management skills and can certainly manage an organization as well.

CONCLUSION:

“Development will be endangered if it’s not engendered”

Unfortunately, women in India have always been seen as a gender which is best suitable for domestic work and not as a mainstream economic contributor. Thanks to the deep seated patriarchal ideology. This unholy trend is still continuing and is visible in the startup ecosystem where the number of woman entrepreneurs is abysmally low. To balance this Economic development of



women is needed, only this is the most effective way to empower and emancipate women, and this in turn will further the economic development of the country by their active participation in labor force. Only the economic empowerment of women can have far reaching effects. It can change the gender equations both inside and outside the house, helping them to overcome the fear of helplessness and powerlessness. Therefore, it is the high time we need to remove this gender asymmetry from our economic system.

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