
Woman empowerment in changing society

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ABSTRACT

Women Empowerment In Changing Society A Study Globally, the subject of women's empowerment has garnered attention as society has progressed in recent decades. Over the past few decades, women's empowerment has been a topic of intense debate and thought. This agenda has also been at the top of the lists for the majority of government plans and initiatives. Every country has made efforts to solve this problem and improve the socioeconomic standing of women. However, it has been noted that the majority of policies and initiatives primarily consider empowerment in the economic sense, disregarding other factors like health, education, and literacy in the process. Introduction Women have played an equally significant role in the history of human evolution as males. In reality, a country's success as a whole may be gauged by the position, employment, and job that women undertake in society. A nation's social, economic, or political development will stall if women aren't involved in national affairs. Women make up half of humankind and work two thirds of all hours worldwide. She controls less than one-tenth of the world's resources and barely makes up one-third of the global income. This demonstrates how miserable women's economic standing is, and how much worse it is in a nation like India. Women perform two-thirds of the labour force, make up roughly 50% of the population, and create 50% of the nation's food supply. They control 10% of the country's wealth and receive one third of the total compensation (Reddy et al., 1994).

introduction

Women were cherished and revered as deities in ancient Indian civilization. However, the prestige of women drastically declined in middle age. In our culture, women are solely expected to take care of home chores like cooking, cleaning, and childrearing. Men are for the field, according to an ancient and widely held belief, whereas women are exclusively meant for the house. Women are breaking down all societal boundaries and obstacles that society has against them nowadays. Prior to this, women had a lot of issues due to a male-dominated, patriarchal social structure, the observance of antiquated traditional beliefs, etc. Only the conventional responsibilities of childbearing and childrearing fell to women. Even though women's standing has slightly improved in the modern world, they continue to have issues. They must work together to fulfil their obligations to their families and to their jobs without the support of their husbands. In certain circumstances, women's conditions worsen when they are mistreated by family members rather than receiving aid. Sexual harassment by family members, relatives, neighbours, acquaintances, bosses, and other coworkers is more prevalent both at home and at work. To support their work and preserve their familial ties, they must endure significant hardships in their everyday lives.

OBJECTIVE

1. To comprehend the shifts in women's behaviour through some scientific data.
2. To examine the changing situation of women philosophically and historically.

Concept of Empowerment

In order for individuals to effectively represent their interests and act (again) on their own authority, empowerment refers to policies and initiatives that promote people's autonomy and self-determination in their daily lives and in their communities. In order to overcome their sense of helplessness and lack of influence, and to understand and finally make use of their opportunities and resources, people need both professional support and the process of self-empowerment. Women or groups of women should be able to develop their full identity and strength in all sectors of life via the multifaceted process of empowerment. It entails giving people more access to information and resources, more freedom in decision-making so they may better organise their life or exert more control over external factors influencing them, and freedom from shocks imposed on them by tradition, belief, and practise. Development that promotes justice is often believed to unleash the forces that elevate the status of diverse segments of the people in a nation, particularly women. "Women's organisations work to empower themselves by developing their own sense of independence. They are entitled to make their own decisions in life.

Additionally, they aim to have power and access to resources. Empowerment is a process that enables people to take charge of their life by being more conscious, acting, and striving for more control. The emotion of empowerment is the one that ignites the psychological drive to achieve one's objectives. Since the term "empowerment" hasn't been defined all that clearly up to this point, it may be presumed that it can be understood in many contexts and situations. However, in the context of women, empowerment essentially refers to a sense of self-awareness supported by the knowledge, abilities, and information that could help women improve their self-esteem and facilitate their ability to play a decision-making role in the current patriarchal society where women have always been subordinate to men. Increasing a person's or a community's spiritual, political, social, or economic strength is referred to as empowerment. It frequently entails the empowered person growing self-assured.

Issues and Problems faced by Women in India

There are various issues and problems which women generally face in the society in India. Some of the problems are mentioned and described below:

1. Selective abortion and female infanticide

Since years, it has been the most typical practise in India to abort a female foetus in the mother's womb following foetal sex determination and sex-selective abortion done by medical experts.

2. Sexual harassment

It is a method of sexual exploitation of a girl kid by family members, neighbours, friends, or other family members in the house, streets, public places, transportation, offices, etc.

3. Dowry and Bride burning

Another issue that typically affects women from lower- or middle-class families during or after marriage. Boys' parents want a lot of money from the bride's family in order to become wealthy all at once. Brides are burned by the groom's family if the dowry demand is not met. Approximately 6787 dowry death cases were reported in India in 2005, according to records from the Indian National Crime Bureau.

4. Disparity in education

In the present day, women still have lower levels of education than males. Rural communities have greater rates of female illiteracy, where the percentage of illiterate women is at least 63%.

5. Domestic violence

It is like endemic and widespread disease affects almost 70% of Indian women according to the women and child development official. It is performed by the husband, relative or other family member.

6. Child Marriages

Early marriage of the girls by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry. It is highly practiced in the rural India.

7. Inadequate Nutrition

Inadequate nutrition in the childhood affects women in their later life especially women belonging to the lower middle class and poor families.

8. Low status in the family

It is the abuse or violence against women.

9. Women are considered as inferior to men

So they are not allowed to join military services.

10. Status of widows

Indian society views widows as being useless. They are mistreated and made to wear only white clothing. In the past, women had to deal with issues like devadasi system, child marriage, sati pratha, pardapratha, restrictions on widows' ability to remarry, and widows' exploitation. However, practically all of the long-standing social problems have slowly faded away, giving way to brand-new challenges. Despite having greater ability, skill, originality, self-respect, personality, and efficiency than males, women continue to struggle with a variety of issues. Even though the Indian Constitution grants them the same chances and privileges as men, they nonetheless have difficulties in their day-to-day lives.

Some of the major problems modern women are still facing mentioned below:

1. Violence against women:

Violence against women is affecting them virtually daily, which is upsetting society. As crimes against women rise, more and more women are becoming victims of violence (according to the report of Crime Record Bureau of the Central Home Ministry). Every 44 minutes a woman is kidnapped, every 47 minutes she is raped, 17 dowry killings occur every day, etc. They may experience violence from both inside and beyond the family (such as dowry-related harassment, murder, marital rape, wife-battery, sexual abuse, denial of wholesome food, female genital mutilation, etc). (kidnapping, rape, murder, etc).

2. Gender discrimination

Women are given less prominence and are seen as the weaker segment of society than males. Children of girls are now becoming true victims of prejudice. The patriarchal framework of Indian households also results in inequality of power and employment for men and women. The fall of the female population, jobs, public life, health, education, and other sectors are all impacted by gender discrimination for women.

- **Problems of female education**

Women education percentage is low in India especially in the rural areas because they are discouraged for higher education like professional and technical education.

- **Problems related to unemployment**

Women are getting more problems in searching their suitable work. They become more prone to the exploitation and harassment in the work areas.

- **Boss Intentionally**

They are given more work and hard tasks by their boss intentionally. They have to prove their devotion, seriousness and sincerity towards work time to time.

- **Unbearable Conditions**

Women who are uneducated more prone to divorce and desertion by their husbands on any stage of life. They have to live whole life with fear of divorce. In some cases they have to finish their life because of unbearable conditions.

- **Increasing**

Dowry system is another huge women problem in the society which is increasing day by day. Women are ill-treated, man-handled, disrespected, tortured and suffer other cruelties (violence, murder and suicide) because of the lack of dowry at the time of marriage. It causes degradation of women status to a great extent.

Poverty Eradication

Given the harsh realities of social discrimination and the fact that women make up the majority of people living below the poverty line and are frequently in situations of extreme poverty, macroeconomic policies and programmes to end poverty will specifically address the needs and issues of such women. Programs that

are already gender-oriented and have specific aims for women will be better implemented. By providing them with a variety of social and economic choices as well as the required support measures to improve their capacities, steps will be taken to mobilise disadvantaged women and facilitate the convergence of services. Micro Loans The construction of new and strengthening of existing micro-credit mechanisms and microfinance institutions will be done to increase the reach of credit in order to improve women's access to credit for consumption and production. To guarantee that all women living below the poverty line have simple access to credit, further supportive measures would be required to ensure an appropriate flow of credit through existing financial institutions and banks.

Women and Economy

By institutionalising women's participation in these processes, macroeconomic and social policies will be designed and implemented with women's viewpoints in mind. The formal and informal sectors (including home-based employees) will acknowledge their production and labour contributions to socioeconomic development, and suitable employment and working conditions laws will be developed. To highlight women's contributions as producers and workers, these steps might include reinterpreting and reinterpretation of traditional definitions of labour wherever necessary, such as in Census data.

Globalization

The objective of women's equality now faces additional obstacles due to globalisation, the effects of which on gender have not yet been thoroughly assessed. However, it is clear from the micro-level studies that were ordered by the Department of Women & Child Development that policies for access to employment and quality of employment need to be reframed. Benefits of the expanding global economy have not been equally dispersed, which has widened economic gaps, feminised poverty, and raised gender inequality due to frequently dangerous working conditions, particularly in rural and informal economies. Strategies will be developed to increase women's capacity and provide them the power to deal with any negative social and economic effects that the process of globalisation may have.

Women and Agriculture

In light of the crucial role that women play as producers in the agriculture and related industries, special efforts will be taken to guarantee that the advantages of training, extension, and other programmes will reach them proportionately to their numbers. To help women employees in the agriculture sector, the programmes for training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development, and other occupations related to agriculture, such as horticulture, livestock, including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries, etc., will be increased.

Women and Industry

The growth of these industries has been greatly aided by the significant role that women have played in the fields of electronics, computer technology, food processing, the agro industry, and textiles. To engage in different industrial sectors, they would receive complete assistance in terms of labour laws, social security, and other support services. Even if they wanted to, women are now unable to work the night shift in

factories. We'll take the necessary steps to make it possible for women to work the night shift in manufacturing. Support services like security, transportation, etc. will go along with this.

Support Services

To create an enabling environment and ensure their full participation in social, political, and economic life, the provision of support services for women, such as child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the elderly, and the disabled, will be expanded and improved. In order to enable women to engage successfully in the developing process, women-friendly personnel policies will also be developed.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Education

It will be made sure that women and girls have equal access to education. To facilitate lifelong learning and the development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women, special measures will be taken to eradicate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrollment and retention rates of girls, and improve the quality of education. One area of attention would be closing the gender gap in secondary and higher education. With a specific focus on girls and women, especially those from disadvantaged sectors like the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes/Minorities, current policies' sectorial time objectives would be met. At all levels of the educational system, gender-sensitive curriculum would be created in order to address sex stereotyping as one of the reasons of gender discrimination.

Health

The needs of women and girls at all phases of the life cycle will receive special attention as part of a holistic approach to women's health that incorporates both nutrition and healthcare services. A top aim is to lower baby and mother mortality rates since they are sensitive markers of human development. The National Population Policy 2000's aims for maternal mortality rate (MMR) and infant mortality rate (IMR) are reiterated in this policy. Women should have access to thorough, reasonably priced, and high-quality medical treatment. Women's reproductive rights, their susceptibility to sexual and health issues, as well as endemic, infectious, and communicable illnesses including malaria, TB, and water borne diseases, as well as hypertension and cardio-pulmonary disorders, will all be taken into account when measures are undertaken. From a gender perspective, the effects of HIV/AIDS and other STDs on social development, health, and wellness will be discussed. The provision of reliable and accurate data at the micro level on deaths, births, and marriages is necessary to address issues of infant and maternal mortality, as well as early marriage. Birth and death registration would be strictly enforced, and marriage registration would become required. This Policy acknowledges the critical need for men and women to have access to safe, efficient, and affordable family planning methods of their choice as well as the need to appropriately address the issues of early marriages and child spacing in accordance with the National Population Policy's (2000) commitment to population stabilisation. By 2010, child weddings should no longer occur as a result of interventions including education expansion, mandatory marriage registration, and specialised programmes like BSY.

Women's traditional knowledge of nutrition and health care will be acknowledged via correct documentation, and its use will be promoted. Within the context of the total health infrastructure accessible to women, the use of alternative and Indian medicine will be improved.

Empowerment of women in India

The idea of empowerment comes from having power. Where it does not exist or does not exist sufficiently, it is vesting. Empowering women entails giving them the tools they need to be economically independent, self-sufficient, and confident enough to deal with any challenging circumstances. It also means enabling them to take part in development efforts. The empowered women ought to be allowed to take part in the decision-making process. In India, the National Commission for Women (NCW) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD1985) have sought to protect the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Indian Constitution gave women some special rights related to seat reservations (33%), but according to the HRD report from March 2002, the legislatures with the highest proportion of women are Sweden (42.7%), Denmark (38%), Finland (36%), and Iceland (34.9%). The Indian government's initiative to give women more influence, at least at the village level, is known as "The New Panchayati Raj." In order to guarantee equal rights for women, the Indian government has ratified a number of international agreements and human rights instruments. These include the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (1995), CEDAW (1993), the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), and other similar documents. 2001 was designated as the year of women's emancipation. A historic document known as "the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women" was adopted this year. The National Credit Fund for Women (1993), the Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), the Information and Mass Education (IME), and other initiatives have been implemented by the government for the benefit of women. The growth of women's engagement in Panchayati Raj institutions during the past several years has been the most encouraging trend. At the village council level, there are a large number of elected female representatives. Currently, there are 20, 56, 882 laces Gaon panchayat members nationwide, of whom 8, 38, 244 (40.48%) are women. Similarly, there are 1, 09, 324 members of Anchalik panchayat, of which 47, 455, (40.41%), and 11, 708 members of Zila porisod, of which 4, 923 (42.05%) are women. Women are also increasingly making an impact at the federal and state levels. Today, we have seen women serve as president, chief ministers of various political parties, well-known businesspeople, etc. Among them, Mrs. Protiva Devi Singh Patil, Shila Dexit, Mayawati, Sonia Gandhi, Binda Kart, Nazma Heptulla, Indira Nuye (Pepsi-Co), BJP leader Susma Soraj, railway minister Momta Benarji, "Narmada Basao" leader Medhapatekar, Indiand Iron Woman, former prime minister Idira Gandhi, etc. are the most well Women are also involved in problems of gender parity, education, health, and child raising that pertain to human development. Many of them have been involved in the production and distribution of a variety of homegrown goods, such as pickles, clothing, needlework, etc. The problem of economic empowerment of women is of utmost significance to political thinkers, social thinkers, and reformers since it is now thought of as a sine qua non of progress for a nation.

Major Policies and Programmes for the Development and Empowerment of Women

The government had intentionally promoted a supportive policy climate where women's issues were adequately represented, stated, and seriously addressed within the broad objectives set forth by the Five Year

Plans. Many policy tools had been developed over the years as part of this drive for the general development of women, which was seen as a crucial component of women's empowerment. All people have access to a basic education thanks to the 1986–1992 National Policy on Education. A comprehensive effort was undertaken to improve the availability of learning opportunities and infrastructure for kids in basic and upper primary schools. In order to achieve complete literacy, the National Literacy Mission was established in 1988, with dropout children and illiterate mothers as its main targets. The National Commission for Women (NCW) was established on January 31, 1992, in accordance with the National Commission of Women Act, 1990, to protect the rights and interests of women. It was a legal entity. This body's main responsibility was to carry out its mandated duties, including protecting women's rights by looking into individual complaints of atrocities, sexual harassment of women at work, holding Parivarik or Mahila Lok Adalats, legal awareness campaigns, or other events, and looking into individual complaints of atrocities, harassment, or denial of rights. It also took Suo moto rem actions when necessary. The National Women's Fund was started in the 1992–1993 fiscal year. This fund's primary goal was to help underprivileged women who needed loans. A total of 31 crore rupees were raised to create this fund as a society under the Social Registration Act. More than 250 nongovernmental groups have received assistance from this fund. In 1993, Rashtriya Mohila Kosh (RMK) was founded. It served as a national-level mechanism to provide for the informal sector's impoverished and asset-less women's credit requirements. Rashtriya Mohila Kosh had implemented a variety of marketing strategies to spread awareness of the concepts of microfinance, thrift credit, the establishment and stability of SHGs, and entrepreneurial development for underprivileged women. The National Nutrition Policy of 1993 promoted a comprehensive approach to addressing the issues of malnutrition, its deficiencies, and diseases in order to achieve an ideal state of nutrition for all segments of society, with a special focus on women, mothers, and children who were weak and "at-risk." A number of programmes linked to women's health were highlighted in the Ninth Five Year Plan's approach. This policy also emphasised the need to eliminate Chronic Energy Deficiency (CED), a significant health issue for women, as well as to provide adequate antenatal, intrapartum, and neonatal care under the RCH programme and ensure food supplementation through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. As a step toward achieving the two-child norm, the National Population Policy, introduced in 2000, promoted population stabilisation concerns and made sure that everyone had access to high-quality contraceptive services. It also aimed to lower the infant and maternal mortality rates (IMR and MMR, respectively) (MMR). The main goals of this programme were to increase the number of deliveries in institutions, encourage females to delay marriage, and immunise all children. Increased access for women to essential health care was made possible by the National Health Policy of 2001. The Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme (1997) underwent a number of new initiatives throughout the Ninth Plan period in order to broaden its scope and improve customer satisfaction. The Indian National Policy for Women's Empowerment, adopted in 2001, sought to progress, develop, and empower women. In order to promote the active engagement of all stakeholders in accomplishing the Policy's objectives, it was extensively distributed. The following are more specifically the goals of the National Policy for Women's Empowerment:

- i. Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realise their full potential.
- ii. The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil.

- iii. Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- iv. Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- v. Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- vi. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women
- vii. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- viii. Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- ix. Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

Similar to this, on March 8, 2010, the Indian government unveiled the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW). The mission's goal was to improve the systemic procedures for fostering the all-around development of women. This objective improved cross-sector cooperation and facilitated the coordination of all programmes for the socioeconomic advancement of women across ministries and departments. Given its purpose, the Mission's name, Mission Purna Shakti, connotes a commitment to the total empowerment of women. The mission's goal was to "strengthen the processes that promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender justice via inter-sectoral convergence of programmes that benefit women, generate synergy among many stakeholders, and create an atmosphere that is supportive of social change." The mission's goal was to offer a single point of contact for all programmes that the Government for Women ran under the auspices of several Central Ministries. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women, 2010, selected many critical measures, among them:

- Monitoring and reviewing progress; cross-sector convergence of women's programmes.
- Stabilizing the institutional structure to help women more effectively.
- For the purpose of making evidence-based policy decisions, focused research, reviews of programmes, laws, and policies, as well as gender audits.
- Investment in microcredit, vocational training, skill and entrepreneurial development, and SHG development for the economic empowerment of women. Support for Panchayati Raj institutions, women's movements, and community leaders in order to develop local organisations. 360-degree media and communication strategy for behaviour change and social mobilisation for gender equality.

Apart from these there were a large number of important schemes run by the Central and State Government that had impacted lives of women and had contributed to their empowerment. Some of these schemes were:

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)
- Public Distribution System for Food (PDS)
- Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDSS)
- National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)
- National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA)
- National Literacy Mission (NLM)
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA)
- Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)
- The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna
- Total Sanitation Campaign
- Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme
- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme
- Support for training and Empowerment Programme for Women (STEP)
- SWADHAR
- Janani Suraksha yojana
- Panchayat Mahila Evam Yuva Shakti Abhiyan
- Schemes for Leadership Development for Minority Women
- Science and Technology for Women
- Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana of NSTFDC
- Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
- Kanyashree Prakalpa
- Rupashree Prakalpa

Through these measures, the relevance of the gender equality issue and the empowerment of women for long-term growth in the social and economic realms was acknowledged. However, there was still a significant disparity between the objectives set forth in the Constitution, laws, politics, plans, programmes, and associated institutions and the reality of women's situation in India.

CONCLUSION

We can draw the conclusion that the situation for women has changed over time. In the early Vedic era, women had positions of great dignity and prestige. Women were incredibly important in the home and in setting the direction of society during this time. They had experienced a good deal of equality and freedom. Like males, they engaged in all activities. In the Vedic and Upanishadic eras, the birth of a girl did not cause the family any distress. In this time, it did not result in the killing of female infants. The Vedic era included children's education. For both boys and girls, upanayana, or the ceremonial introduction into Vedic learning, was typical. There were two courses for female students: Brhmavadinis and Sadyovadhush. Brhmavadinis were devoted lifetime scholars of philosophy and theology. Sadyovadhush used to pursue their education up till marriage. Child marriage was not a common practise throughout the Vedic era. Inter-caste marriages occurred in society during this period. In this society, the wife received the highest level of respect and civility. She was regarded as the "ardhangini," or half of her husband's being. The dowry system was obscure. In the Vedic era, marriage took the form of monogamy. Divorce was not allowed. Widows were allowed to be remarried. The Sati system was not widely used in society. The Vedic era was not aware of the purdah system.

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