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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT:

A woman is a being with senses, imagination and thoughts and she should be able to express them freely. "In our society, the women who break down barriers are those who ignore limits."- Arnold Schwarzenegger. The essential factors for empowerment are self-confidence, exposure and independence. Men and women are one of the major components of society. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and community.

KEYWORDS: Women Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment refers to "women's ability to make strategic life choices where that ability had been previously denied them" Accordingly, empowerment is central to the processes of maintaining the benefits of women at an individual, household, community and broader levels. It involves the action of boosting the status of women through literacy, education, training and raising awareness. Hence, women's empowerment is all about allowing and equipping women to make life-determining choices across different issues in the country. *Women Empowerment itself elaborates that Social Rights, Political Rights, Economic stability, judicial strength and all other rights should be also equal to women. There should be no*

discrimination between men and woman. Women should now there fundamental and social rights which they get once they born.

- There should be respect and dignity towards Women.
- Have total independences of their own life and lifestyle inside the home and also outside at their work.
- They should make their decision, by their own choice.
- They should have a high social respect in society.
- They have equal rights in society and other judicial works.
- They should not be discriminated while providing any type of education.
- They should select their own economic and financial choices by their own.
- There should not be any discrimination between woman and man while giving jobs and employment.
- They should have safe and

secured Working location with proper privacy.

The need for women empowerment arose because of the gender discrimination and male domination in the Indian society since ancient time. Women are being suppressed by their family members and society for many reasons. They have been targeted for many types of violence and discriminatory practices by the male members of the family and society in India and other countries as well. Wrong and old practices in the society from ancient times have taken the form of well-developed customs and traditions.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

- Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
- Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.

Social Women Empowerment: A critical aspect of social empowerment of women is the promotion of gender equality. Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

Educational Women Empowerment: It means empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. It means making women aware of their rights and developing a confidence to claim them.

Economic and occupational empowerment: It implies a better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods owned and managed by women. It means reducing their financial dependence on their male counterparts by making them a significant part of the human resource.

Legal Women Empowerment: It suggests the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women empowerment. It means addressing the gaps between what the law prescribes and what actually occurs.

Political Women Empowerment: It means the existence of a political system favoring the participation in and control by the women of the political decision-making process and in governance.

The position of Women in India: The position enjoyed by women in the Rig- Vedic period deteriorated in the later Vedic civilization. Women were denied the right to education and widow remarriage. They were denied the right to inheritance and ownership of property. Many social evils like child marriage and dowry system surfaced and started to engulf women. During Gupta period, the status of women immensely deteriorated. Dowry became an institution and Sati Pratha became prominent.

During the British Raj, many social reformers such as Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Jyotirao Phule started agitations for the empowerment of women. Their efforts led to the abolition of Sati and formulation of the Widow Remarriage Act. Later, stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Nehru advocated women rights. As a result of their concentrated efforts, the status of women in social, economic and political life began to elevate in the Indian society.

Current Scenario on Women Empowerment: Based on the ideas championed by our founding fathers for women empowerment, many social, economic and political provisions were incorporated in the Indian Constitution. Women in India now participate in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sector and science and technology. But due to the deep- rooted patriarchal mentality in the Indian society, women are still victimized, humiliated, tortured and exploited. Even after almost seven decades of Independence, women are still subjected to discrimination in the social, economic and educational field.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT - CHALLENGES

Perspective: The most widespread and dehumanizing discriminations against women are on the basis of the biased perspective. The discrimination against the girl child begins from the birth itself. Boys are preferred over girls; hence, female infanticide is a common practice in India. The ordeal that an Indian girl faces at birth is only the beginning of a lifelong struggle to be seen and heard.

Patriarchate Bottlenecks The traditional Indian society is a patriarchal society ruled by the diktats of self-proclaimed caste lords who are the guardians of archaic and unjust traditions. They put the burden of traditions, culture, and honor on the shoulders of women and mark their growth. The incidences of “honor killing” reveal the distorted social fiber in the male-dominated society.

Economic Backwardness: Women constitute only 29% of the workforce but forms majority of the destitute in the country. There has been a failure in transforming the available women base into human resource. This, in turn, has hampered not only the economic development of women but also of the country’ as a whole.

Implementation Gaps Through all these years, the attention is only on developing and devising new schemes, policies and programmes and have paid less attention to the proper monitoring system and implementation short-sightedness, for e.g. despite the presence of The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Technologies Act and various health programmes like JananiSurakshaYojana and National Rural Health Mission (NHRM), our country has a skewed sex ratio and a high maternal mortality .rate (MMR).

Loopholes in the legal structure Although there are a number of laws to protect women against all sorts of violence yet there has been the significant increase in the episodes of rapes, extortions, acid, attacks etc. This is due to delay in legal procedures and the presence of several loopholes in the functioning of a judicial system.

Lack of Political Will: The still- pending Women’s Reservation Bill underscores the lack of political will to empower women politically. The male dominance prevails in the politics of India and women are forced to remain mute spectators.

Way ahead starts with bridging the deep-rooted biases through sustained reconditioning. It is only possible by promoting the idea of gender equality and uprooting social ideology of male child preferability. This concept of equality should be first developed in each and every household and from there; it should be taken to the society. This can be achieved by running sustained awareness programs with the help of NukkadNatak or dramas, radio, television, Internet, etc. across the country.

Replacing ‘Patriarchy’ with Parity: A strong patriarchate society with deep- rooted socio-cultural values continues to affect women’s empowerment. The need of the hour is an egalitarian society, where there is no place for superiority. The Government should identify and eliminate such forces that work to keep alive the tradition of male dominance over its female counterpart by issuing inhumane and unlawful diktats.

Education is the most important and indispensable tool for women empowerment. It makes women aware of their rights and responsibilities. Educational achievements of a woman can have ripple effects for the family and across generations. Most of the girls drop out of schools due to the unavailability of separate toilets for them. The recently launched ‘Swachh Bharat Mission’ focusing on improving sanitation facilities in schools and every rural household by 2019, can prove to be very significant in bringing down the rate of girls dropping out of school.

Political Will: Women should have access to resources, rights, and entitlements. They should be given decision-making powers and due position in governance. Thus, the Women Reservation Bill should be passed as soon as possible to increase the effective participation of women in the politics of India.

Bridging implementation gaps: Government or community-based bodies must be set up to monitor the programs devised for the welfare of the society. Due importance should be given for their proper implementation and their monitoring and evaluation through social audits.

Justice delayed is justice denied. Efforts should be made to restructure the legal process to deliver fair and in - time justice to the victims of heinous crimes like rapes, acid attacks, sexual

harassment, trafficking and domestic violence. The idea of fast-track courts, devised to impart speedy justice to the victims of rapes and other crimes against women, is a good initiative taken by the judiciary and the Government of India.

CONCLUSION

Empowering women socially, economically, educationally politically and legally is going to be a Herculean task. It is not going to be easy to change the culture of disregard for women which are so deep-rooted in Indian society. But it does not mean that it is implausible. Only revolutions bring changes in a day, but reforms take their time. This one, in particular, will take its time as well. The idea of women empowerment might sound hard by the yard, but by the inch, it is just a cinch. All we need is a concentrated effort focused in the right direction that would rest only with the liberation of women from all forms of evil.

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