

Strategies for social, political and economical empowerment of women - A peer review study

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ABSTRACT

Why need of women empowerment? The most famous saying said by the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is “To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Women empowerment concept has received much attention in recent from historical traditional centuries. There are several meanings attached to the concept of women empowerment. This literature review explores the origin of the term women empowerment as it is related to gender and equality. This literature review looks at four power perspectives that are used to explain the increasing need for women empowerment today. The related concepts of power, agency, resources and achievements are used to explain and describe the problems associated with women empowerment globally. The theoretical underinnings of this literature review are important for policy-makers and government the world over. Finally, the study can be purposeful for application and implication of various strategies to empower women, socially, economically and politically are identified and explained.

Keywords: Empowerment, Human Rights, Integration, Discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

The empowerment of women, their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community. The World Conference on Human Rights urges the full and equal enjoyment by women of all human rights and that this is a priority for Governments and for the United Nations. The World Conference on Human Rights also underlines the importance of the integration and full participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries in the development process. In this context, cooperation and coordination should be strengthened for the social, political, economical empowerment of women.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Why need of women empowerment? The most famous saying said by the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is “To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves”. In India, to empower the women, first it needs to kill all the demons killing women's rights and values in the society such as dowry system, illiteracy, sexual harassment, inequality, female infanticide, and domestic violence against women, rape, prostitution, illegal trafficking and other issues. Gender discrimination in the nation brings cultural, social, economic and educational differences which push country back. Giving priority to the gender equality facilitates women empowerment all over the country to get the high level goal of women empowerment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the strategies for women empowerment.
2. To study the new initiatives of women in need for empowerment in India.
3. To analyze the factors influencing the empowerment of women in need.
4. To study the Government Schemes for Women in need empowerment.
5. To identify the Hindrances in the Path of Women in need empowerment.
6. To offer useful Suggestions in the light of Findings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on analytical descriptive type in nature. In this paper attempt has made to analyze the empowerment of women in need in India. The data used in it is purely from secondary sources according to the need of this study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of the existing literature is the basement of any research. We have to know literature relating to women's empowerment. What the different indicators of women's empowerment how much they are effective to change women's empowerment etc. Understanding the impacts of women's empowerment on different developmental outcomes is another objective of our study.

In order to gather the existing knowledge regarding the above mentioned facts we need an extensive literature survey. Keeping this view in mind, reviewed various literatures relating to our study.

1. In different studies women's empowerment has been defined in different manners. Keller and Mbewe (1991, cited in Rowlands, 1995) state that women's empowerment is a process which enables the women to organize themselves to increase their self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and to have control over resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their own subordination.
2. The study of Rowlands (1995) has explored the meaning of empowerment, in the context of its root-concept: power. She has opined that empowerment has three dimensions such as Personal, Close relationships and Collective. Although she agrees with the view that appropriate external support and intervention can expedite and encourage empowerment.
3. In the context of development Rowlands (1995) has pointed out the importance of individual as well as collective empowerment. Necessary steps for raising level of confidence and self-esteem among poor and marginalized people in such a way that will enhance their ability to take charge of their own needs.
4. Dreze and Sen (1995) have described women empowerment as ability to define self-interest and choice. They have proposed to reduce gender biasness in mortality rate and natality rates. Access to education and professional training, in employment, in the ownership of property and in household work and decision making.
5. Kishor (1997) has conceptualized empowerment in terms of 'control' by which women would be able to access information, take decision and act in their own interest or for their dependents. She has considered three categories of composite indicators to measure women's empowerment.
6. Mayoux (2000) has clarified basic views regarding the inter-linkage between microfinance and women's empowerment.
7. According to Kabeer (2001) empowerment refers to the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them. She has analyzed the concept of women empowerment based on three dimensions namely, Resources, Agency and Achievements.
8. Viswanathan (2001) has critically assessed the implication of the components of Human Development Index and Gender development Index in Indian context with special reference to the state of Karnataka.
9. Molhotra, et al. (2002) have come to the conclusion that women's empowerment is a "Process" and "agency" are two essential elements of women's empowerment. Women's empowerment encompasses a progression, where women act as agent, from one state to another.

CHALLENGES

There are several challenges that are plaguing the issues of women's right in India. Targeting these issues will directly empowerment of women in India

EDUCATION

While the country has grown from leaps and bounds since independence where education is concerned. the gap between women and men is severe. While 82.14% of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are known to be literate in India. The gender bias is in higher education, specialized professional trainings which hit women very hard in employment and attaining top leadership in any field.

POVERTY

Poverty is considered the greatest threat to peace in the world, and eradication of poverty should be a national goal as important as the eradication of illiteracy. Due to this, women are exploited as domestic helps.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety concerns of women are paramount for the wellbeing of a country and are an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. However there are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned

PROFESSIONAL INEQUALITY

This inequality is practiced in employment and promotions. Women face countless handicaps in male customized and dominated environs in Government Offices and Private enterprises.

MORALITY AND INEQUALITY

Due to gender bias in health and nutrition there is unusually high mortality rate in women reducing their population further especially in Asia, Africa and China.

HOUSEHOLD INEQUALITY

Household relations show gender bias in small but significant manners all across the globe, more so, in India e.g. sharing burden of housework, childcare and menial works by so called division of work.

WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION

In the global system, marked with widening income disparities, economic growth disparities, human capital disparities (life expectancy, nutrition, infant and child mortality, adult literacy, enrolment ratio, etc.) disparities in the distribution of global economic resources and opportunities, the disturbing question arises as to protect the interests of the poor and under privileged. If the global opportunities continue to be feminised to look at development with a human face. Women's concerns need to be explicitly incorporated as integral elements of the objectives, content, monitoring and international support for structural adjustment. Hence there is a need to change the total perspective. Development and Empowerment will have no real meaning till we focus on the issue of the Girl Child, Gender violence and Globalization.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Empowerment may be described as a process which helps people to assert their control over the factors which affect their lives. Empowerment of women means developing them as more aware individuals, who are politically active, economically productive and independent and are able to make intelligent discussion in matters that affect them. Women empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International women Conference in 1985 at Nairobi, which defined it as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favours of women. Development Fund for Women (UNDFW) includes the following factors in its definition of women empowerment. Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the way in which these relations may be changed. Batliwala (1974) defines empowerment as "the process of challenging existing power relation and of gaining greater control over the source of power". Women's empowerment is seen as the process and the result of the process of Challenging the ideology of male domination and women's subordinations.

Women Empowerment Models

According to Sohail (2014:8-9) women can be empowered by using the following models:

1. Institutions should be developed for providing equal resources to men and women.
2. Media and NGOs should raise awareness about women rights.
3. Policy action should be taken to reduce gender inequality.
4. Women should be provided with the education and job opportunities.
5. Women should be granted loans at lower interest rates so that they are encouraged and their skills are developed.
6. Women should have the right to own their property.
7. Women must have simple business registration procedures.
8. Male dominance should be handled in a peaceful manner.
9. Women should have access to economic resources which leads to the economic growth.
10. For the same work equal amount of payment should be given to both men and women and the Amount should be reasonable enough so that they could spend better life.
11. There should be no discrimination in assigning work to people based on gender.
12. Both men and women should be given equal opportunities.
13. Safe working conditions should be provided to both men and women.
14. Women should be encouraged to join the fields of work which have been considered as fields for men

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA

The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women. Present article discusses about various initiatives taken by Government of India for empowering women by analyzing position of India in Gender Inequality Index and Global Gender Gap Index of United Nations. Article concludes with the note that due recognition must be given to women and society should come forward to ensure equal status for women in all spheres of life. Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women.

India has also ratified various International conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The Government of India declared 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment (Swashakti). The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women was passed in 2001.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT POLICY 2001

The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The Policy will be widely disseminated so as to encourage active participation of all stakeholders for achieving its goals.

- (i) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential for women on equal basis with men in all spheres—political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. by changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- (iv) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.

STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The present study is review of strategies for development of social, political, economical empowerment of women. Need for new initiatives states that there were several women who organized and mobilized around the globe for their rights. They need to be promoted for the survival and proper education of female child to really bring the dream of women empowerment come true.

BROAD-BASED INDICATIVE STRATEGY

To tackle the above areas of inequality, the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK government has outlined 10 objectives for women's empowerment and a plan of action to achieve each objective.

The DFID strategy reflects a donor's perspective, but it could be used as a starting point for preparing a strategy at a national, regional, local or CSO (civil society organization) level, with priorities based on regional and local situations.

1. Advocacy to protect gender equality through international and national policy reform
2. Greater access to assets and economic opportunities for women
3. More equality for women in human development areas such as education and healthcare
4. More participation of women in decision-making and leadership roles
5. Increase women's personal security and reduce violence against women
6. Advocacy to promote women's participation in government and civil society
7. Promote equality of women under the law
8. Reduce gender stereotyping and bring about changes in social attitudes towards women
9. Gender-aware approaches to management of the environment
10. Uphold the rights of boys and girls in the Convention on the Rights of the Child

INITIATIVES & WELFARE SCHEMES FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The present study on emerging challenges for development of women-need for new initiatives such as like, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) A Conditional Maternity Benefit Scheme , Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG) , Sabla Swayam Siddha , Scheme for Working Women Hostel , STEP (Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women) ,Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana , Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) , Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

(MGNREGA) , Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme , One Stop Centre Scheme , Women Helpline Scheme , Working Women Hostel , Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme For the Children of Working Mothers, Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) , NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR , Awardees of Stree Shakti Puruskar, 2014 & Awardees of Nari Shakti Puruskar 12.. Awardees of Rajya Mahila Samman & Zila Mahila Samman . Archived Maternity Programme .

S.No	Welfare Scheme	Total Amount Sanctioned	Total Amount Released
1	Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)	14101.75	14101.75
2	Swadhar Greh Scheme	27.65	–
3	Working Women Hostel Scheme	404.59	364
4	Ujjawala Scheme	–	1.68
5	POSHAN Abhiyaan	–	8806.44
6	Scheme for Adolescent Girls	2050.18	1011.98
7	Child protection Scheme (CPS)	1870.01	–

The present paper looks at some debates and focuses on the social, political, economical empowerment of women, which must be dealt with priority to bring out the empowerment of women in the present era.

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

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. **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. **Economic empowerment of women:** 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. **Educational empowerment of women:** 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.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Empowerment of Women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women.
2. There are several Government programmes and NGOs in the Country, there is still a wide gap that exists between those under protection and those not.
3. Poverty and illiteracy add to these complications to the empowerment of Women
4. In order to create a sustainable world, we must begin to Empower Women.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grassroots problem. Hence, education for women has to be paid special attention.
2. Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.
3. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work.
4. Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts should be there to curb the mal-practices prevalent in the society.

CONCLUSION

It is essential as their thought and their value systems lead the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation; when women move forward the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves. The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women

empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. 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. 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 and women have full opportunities of self decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality.

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