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Women Empowerment: Catalysts for the Change

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Abstract:

Empowerment of women has garnered a lot of global attention and discussion in the past few decades. Most of the government plans and programs have also placed this agenda at the top of their list. Around the world, there have been consistent attempts to improve women's socioeconomic standing and deal with this issue. On the other hand, it has been noted that most of the policies and initiatives exclusively consider economic empowerment, operating under the assumption that women become more independent economically at the expense of other factors such as health, education, and literacy. The role of women is vital for the progress of human race. The position, effort, and contributions made by women in society serve as a barometer for the general advancement of a country. A nation's social, economic, or political advancement will stagnate in the absence of women' are greater contributors in national activities. Fifty percentage of humankind is women, who also work two thirds of the time, in the entire world. Her wealth in the economy is negligible percentage. Her income makes up only one-third of the total. This shows that women's economic standing is appalling, particularly in a nation like India. Fifty percentage population, more than fifty percentage of the work, and half of the food consumed in the nation is produced by women. Their income is one third of the total economy and possesses 10% of the country's income. The conditions of women in the patriarchal society are degenerated form time immemorial.



Keywords: Problems, Suppression, Women, Empowerment, Patriarchal, Rights

Introduction

Indian civilisation in the olden days held women in high regard and revered them as goddesses. However, women's position significantly declined in middle age. In society, women are only supposed to be the care givers of their families, raise their children, and carry out other domestic tasks. People have long held the traditional belief that women belong in the home and men belong in their field. These days, women are overcoming all obstacles posed by societal difficulties and issues that are directed towards them.

Prior to this, women faced numerous challenges as a result of patriarchal society, old customs and beliefs, and male dominance. Women were only accountable for fulfilling conventional tasks such as bearing and raising children. Even if women's status has improved in the modern world, they still face difficulties. Without their husbands' assistance, they must handle both their personal and professional obligations. When women are mistreated by family members rather than receiving assistance, it can sometimes make their situation much more embarrassing. Sexual harassment by friends, neighbours, bosses, family members, and other acquaintances is more commonplace in homes than in workplaces. They must endure great hardships in their day-to-day lives in order to support their careers and preserve their familial bonds.

Discussion:

Theory of Empowerment

In order to enable individuals and communities to act on their own authority and responsibly represent their interests, policies and programs aimed at enhancing individual and community autonomy and self-determination are referred to as empowerment. Empowerment encompasses both the process of empowering oneself and receiving expert guidance to help others overcome feelings of helplessness and influence. So they may eventually identify and take advantage of their opportunities and resources. According to Surekha Rao and Rajamanamma (1999), empowerment is a multifaceted process that aims to help women or groups of women



understand their complete capabilities in all areas. More independence should be given in deciding what is good and what is bad their lives. Generally speaking, justice and development are supposed to create the conditions for different segments of the populace in a nation to become more powerful and to elevate their standing, particularly for women. Organisations of women are the source of empowerment since they aim to increase their independence. They are entitled to decide about their lives. They expect access to resources and are in charge.

Empowerment is a process that assists individuals in taking charge of their life by increasing awareness, acting, and striving for more control. According to Indiresan (1999), empowerment of women is the emotion which ignites the mental energy needed to achieve objectives. Since the word "empowerment" hasn't been defined, it is possible that context will determine how the word is understood. But when it comes to women, empowerment essentially means having an awareness of one's own circumstances and being supported by the knowledge, abilities, and information that could help women become more confident in themselves and play a more active role in decision-making in the male dominated society in which women are historically subservient to men. Enhances an individual's or a community's spiritual, political, social, or economic power is referred to as empowerment. It frequently entails the empowered person growing in self-assurance.

Issues faced by Women in India

Women in Indian society often confront a variety of concerns and problems. A few of the issues are listed and explained below:

1. Female Infanticide and Selective Abortion

The most practiced procedure in India for many years, is performing a sex-selective abortion on a female foetus, once the foetal sex is determined by medical authorities.



2. Harassment of Women

Sexual harassment is one of the kinds, whereby family members, neighbours, acquaintances, or relatives take advantage of a woman in domestic circumstances, in lanes, on transportation, in offices, etc.

3. Dowry and Stove Burst Bride Burning

It is an additional issue that women from lower-class, middle-class and higher class families typically deal in marriage. Groom's parents expect dowry from the bride's family in order to become wealthy quickly. In case bridegroom's family is not happy with the requested money, the brides are burned. Approximately 8976 cases of dowry deaths were reported in India in 2005, based on data from the Indian National Investigation Bureau.

4. Inequality in Literacy

In the present era, a woman still has lower levels of education than a man. Rural communities have greater rates of female illiteracy. where the percentage of uneducated women is at least 63%.

5. Domestic violence

According to women and child development official, it is pervasive sickness that impacts negatively over 60% of women of India. The spouse, a family member, or someone performs it.

6. Child Marriages

Girls are compelled into an early marriage by their parents in order to avoid paying dowry. In India especially in rural areas, it is widely prevalent.

7. Insufficient Nutrition

Insufficient nutrition during the childhood of women have greater health hazards in their later lives, particularly those from lower middle class and impoverished backgrounds.



8. Second grade citizens in the family

Girls and women are ill-treated and assaulted.

9. Women inferior to men

Thus, women are prohibited from enlisting in the armed forces.

10. Position of widows

In Indian society, widows are viewed as insignificant beings. They are mistreated and made to wear only white cloths.

In the past, women had to deal with issues such as child marriages, sati sahaamana, Ghoonghat, prohibitions against widow marriages, exploitation of widows, the Jogini system, etc. Nonetheless, nearly all of the previous, customary issues have progressively vanished from society, giving way to new issues. Even though they possess greater capacity, talent, efficiency, individuality, self-respect, personality, and self-confidence than men, women nonetheless deal with a lot of issues on a daily basis. Even though the Constitution of India grants them the similar privileges and opportunities like men, they nevertheless have difficulties in their day-to-day lives.

Modern women and major issues:

1. Viciousness against women in India:

Nearly every day, women are impacted by numerous forms of violence, which is upsetting society. According to the Central Home Ministry's Crime Record Bureau report, the number of crimes committed against women is rising, and as a result, women are becoming victims of violence on a massive scale on a daily basis. A woman is abducted every 44 minutes, raped every 47 minutes, and 17 people die from dowry every day, among other crimes. They may experience violence from outside the family (kidnapping, rape, murder, etc.) or from in the family (dowry harassment, rape in marriages, wife-beating, sexual exploitation, lack of wholesome food etc.).



2. Gender Inequality

Women are viewed as less important and a weaker segment of society than men. Especially girl child is increasingly becoming actual victims of discrimination. The patriarchal family structure in India contributes to discrimination against women in the workplace and in positions of authority. Gender discrimination impacts women in various domains such as public life, employment, education, health, nutrition, and caregiving.

3. Issues of female education

India has a low percentage of educated women, particularly in villages where women are dispirited from pursuing good education, including professional courses.

4. Difficulties connected to joblessness

Women have additional difficulty finding suitable jobs. They become more vulnerable to harassment and exploitation at work.

5. Employer's Perspective

Their supervisor purposefully assigns them difficult assignments and extra labour. Periodically, they must demonstrate their commitment, earnestness, and genuineness towards their task.

6. Agonizing Environments

Uneducated women are more likely to experience divorce and husband desertion at any point in their lives. They have to live in constant terror of getting divorced. Sometimes women are forced to end their lives due to intolerable circumstances.

7. Menace of Dowry system

Another major issue facing women in society that is getting worse every day is the dower system. If no sufficient dowry is offered at the time of marriage, women are mistreated, manhandled, not respected, harassed, and subjected to other violence. To a large degree, it degrades the standing of women.



Financial Independence of Women

Considering the terrible reality of prejudice both within and between households, and the fact that women make up the mainstream of those who are impoverished and who are frequently facing extreme poverty, macroeconomic policies and programs aimed at eradicating will particularly attend to the requirements and issues of these women. Programs that are already targeted specifically at women and have specific goals for them will be implemented more effectively. By providing them with a variety of social and economic options as well as the required support services to increase their capacities, steps will be taken to mobilise impoverished women and bring services closer together.

Microloans: The creation of new and strengthened microcredit mechanisms and microfinance institutions will be implemented in order to raise the outreach of credit and improve credit availability to women for both productivity and spending. Additional supportive actions would be implemented to guarantee a sufficient credit flow via banks and existing monetary establishments, giving easy access to credit for all women living below the poverty line.

Women in the Economy

Women's viewpoints shall be integrated into the creation and execution of macroeconomic and social policies through the institutionalisation of their involvement in these processes. Both the official and informal sectors—including home-based workers—will acknowledge their contribution to socioeconomic growth as producers and workers, and suitable employment and working conditions rules will be draughted. Whenever necessary, such as in the Census records, these measurements could reinterpret and redefine conventional notions of work to reflect the role of women as workers and producers.

Women and Agriculture

Given the vital part that women play as producers in the agricultural and related industries, concerted efforts will be undertaken to guarantee that the advantages of various programs, coaching, and delay will be distributed to them proportionately to their numbers. The training courses to help women employed in the agriculture industry, women's roles in social forestry,



soil conservation, dairy development, and other related fields including horticulture, livestock, poultry, fisheries, and small animal husbandry will be increased.

Women and Industry

Contributions of women to the fields of electronics, computer food processing, technology, Agro industry, and fabrics have been essential to the growth of these industries. They will receive full help to engage in different industrial sectors Regarding labor legislation, assistance programs such as social security. Currently, women are not allowed to work night shifts in factories, even if they so choose. Appropriate steps will be implemented to allow women to work the factory night shift and Support services for transport, security, and other areas will be provided simultaneously.

Women's Social Empowerment

Literacy

There shall be equal access to education for girls and women. Special efforts will be made to end discrimination, make education universal, end illiteracy, establish a gender-sensitive educational system, boost the enrollment and retention of girls, and enhance the standard of education to support women's advancement in the workplace, vocation, and technical skills. One area of concentration would be closing the gender gap in secondary and tertiary education. Sector-specific time targets outlined in current policies would be met, with an emphasis on women and girls in particular who come from marginalized groups including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and Minorities. At every level of the educational system, gender-sensitive curricula would be created in order to overcome sex stereotyping, which is one of the factors contributing to gender discrimination.

Wellbeing

The requirements of girls and women at all phases of life will receive special attention as part of a comprehensive strategy for women's health that incorporates health services as well as nutrition. Reducing maternal and newborn deaths is a top objective since they are sensitive markers of human development. The national population objectives for the babies and maternal



impermanence rates—outlined in the National Population Policy 2000—are restated in this aspect. Women ought to have access to thorough, reasonably priced and top-notch medical attention.

Nutrition

Given the elevated likelihood of malnourishment and illness that women encounter during the three crucial phases of life childhood and adolescence, as well as the reproductive phase special emphasis will be placed on addressing the nutritional requirements of women across the lifespan. This is particularly significant because there is a direct correlation between the health of early children and adolescents and the health of adolescent females, pregnant, and nursing women. Given that both macro and micronutrient deficiencies can result in a variety of illnesses and disabilities, extra attention will be paid to addressing this issue, particularly in relation to expectant and nursing mothers. We shall work to abolish intra-household discrimination against women and girls in nutrition-related topics by implementing the necessary measures. In order to report the problems of home nutritional disproportions and the unique demands of prenatal and nursing women, nutrition education would be widely used. It will also be guaranteed that women would be comprised in the system's progress, management, and implementation.

Drinking Water and Sanitation

Women's requirements in regard to accessibility to clean, potable water safety and sewage removal, restrooms, and hygienic conditions around dwellings, particularly in both urban and rural slums will receive particular consideration. It will be assured that women participate in the development, provision, and upkeep of these offerings.



Place to Live and Home

A special focus is placed on provide women with appropriate and secure housing and accommodations, including heads of households, working women, students, trainees, and single women. The inclusion of women's perspectives will be implemented in housing policies, housing colony design, and shelter provision in both rural and urban locations.

Environment

The plans and programming for preservation, rehabilitation, and the environment will incorporate women and take their opinions into consideration. Women's involvement in environmental conservation and degradation control will be guaranteed, given the influence of environmental issues on their livelihoods. Most rural women still rely on in the vicinity accessible, non-business energy causes such fuel wood, agricultural waste, and animal manure. The Policy will work to promote non-conventional energy resource programs in order to guarantee the effective and environmentally sustainable utilization of these energy foundations. In order to see a clear impact of these actions on the environment and on the way rural women live, Promoting the use of solar energy, biogas, smokeless kitchen, and other rural uses will be the responsibility of women.

Technology and Science

Initiatives aimed at increasing women's participation in science and technology will be reinforced. In order to increase the participation of women in science and technology, initiatives will be reinforced. There will also be a greater emphasis on fostering a scientific mindset and consciousness. In fields such as information technology and communication where they possess specialized talents, specific steps would be implemented for their training. The development of technology that meet women's demands and lessen their drudgery will also receive significant attention.



Assaults on women

In order to lessen the prevalence of physical and psychological abuse of women, it is important to address the issue whether it arises from recognized norms, traditions, or customs, whether it happens in the family or in society. Institutions, procedures, and support networks will be developed and reinforced in order to prevent this kind of violence, which includes workplace sexual harassment and traditions like dowries; to assist victims of violence in getting well; and to successfully prosecute those who commit such acts. Additionally, initiatives and strategies aimed at combating the trafficking of women and girls will receive particular attention.

The Girl Child's Rights

Enforcing strict preventive and punitive measures both inside and outside the family would end all types of discrimination against girls and violations of their rights. These would be particularly related to the stringent application of the legislation prohibiting the practice of prenatal sex selection as well as female feticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child abuse, and child prostitution, among other things. Positive portrayals of girls and the elimination of discrimination against them both within and outside the home shall be vigorously promoted. The needs of girls will receive particular attention, and significant funds will be set aside for programs related to food and nutrition, health and education, and vocational training. When putting programs into place to eradicate children.

Institutional Systems

The Central and State level institutional systems that support women's advancement will be reinforced. These will be accomplished by interventions as deemed necessary, which will include, but are not limited to, the availability of sufficient resources, advocacy skills training, and the ability to effectively influence legislation, programs, macropolicies, and other initiatives aimed at achieving women's empowerment.

National and State Councils will be formed to oversee the operationalization of the Policy on a regular basis. The National Council will be headed by the Prime Minister and the State Councils by the Chief Ministers and be broad in composition having representatives from the



concerned Departments/Ministries, National and State Commissions for Women, Social Welfare Boards, representatives of Non-Government Organizations, Women's Organisations, Corporate Sector, Trade Unions, financing institutions, academics, experts and social activists etc. These bodies will review the progress made in implementing the Policy twice a year. Periodically, updates on the program's progress under the policy will also be sent to the National Development Council for their input and suggestions. National and State Resource Centres on Women will be formed with the purpose of gathering and disseminating data, carrying out research, conducting surveys, putting in place programs for training and awareness building, etc. Through appropriate information networking systems, these Centres will connect to other academic and research institutions, Women's Studies Centres, and other organisations.

Resource Management

Auxiliary organisations such as civil society, the private sector, financial credit institutions, banks, and concerned departments shall oversee the obtainability of sufficient economical, Market and human resources are needed to implement the policy.

This process will include:

Through the use of gender budgeting, women's benefits are evaluated and resources are allocated to programs that pertain to them. Policies will be modified as necessary to maximise the benefits these schemes provide for women;

1. Sufficient resource allocation by relevant Departments to create and advance the policy previously delineated based on (a) above.
2. promoting cooperation between village-level officials and field personnel from the departments of women and child development, rural development, education, and health
3. Through the implementation of relevant policy initiatives and the creation of new institutions in partnership with the Department of Women & Child Development, banks and other financial credit institutions can meet their credit demands.



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Legislation

The current legislative framework will undergo a comprehensive review, and supplementary legislative actions will be initiated by designated departments to facilitate the implementation of the Policy. This process will encompass an examination of all prevailing laws, comprising secondary legislation, personal, customary, and tribal laws, and associated regulations, in addition to administrative and executive orders, with the aim of removing any references that discriminate based on gender. The planning for this initiative will span the years 2000 to 2003. The specific measures necessary for this endeavor will be developed through a consultative process that includes civil society, the National Commission for Women, and the Department of Women and Child Development. 1. In suitable circumstances, the consultation procedure will be expanded to incorporate additional participants. The successful execution of legislation will be enhanced through the engagement of civil society and community members. Necessary amendments to the legislation will be made as required. Furthermore, To guarantee that the law is effectively enforced, several steps will be taken.

Gender Sensitization

Personnel from the State's legislative, executive, and judicial branches will receive training; policy and program architects, development and implementation organizations, the judiciary, law enforcement apparatus, and non-governmental organisations will receive particular attention.

Conclusion

Women's empowerment improves the world and society as a whole and advances the cause of inclusive participation. Raising family and organizational joy is implied when women contribute.



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Conflict of Interest

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