



ISSN: 0975-833X

REVIEW ARTICLE

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: NEED FOR FAST SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA

*Dr. Awa Shukla

Department of Social Sciences, Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad (Gujarat)

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 06th June, 2015
Received in revised form
14th July, 2015
Accepted 23rd August, 2015
Published online 16th September, 2015

Key words:

Education,
Economic,
Human development.

ABSTRACT

“You can tell the condition of the nation by looking at the status of women.” Jawaharlal Nehru. Atrocities and discrimination are the two major problems, which the Indian women face in the present day society. The emancipation of women is not a simple matter. It requires the attitudinal change of the husband, other family members and society as a whole to the women. The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of the women. The struggle for gender justice will be slow, strenuous and protracted. Education attainment and economic participation are the key constituents in ensuring the empowerment of women. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. True empowerment will be reached only when women take part actively in the decision making process of our country. Mainstreaming women’s empowerment is central to human development.

Copyright © 2015 Awa Shukla. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Awa Shukla, 2015. “Women empowerment: need for fast socio economic development of women in India”, *International Journal of Current Research*, 7, (9), 20373-20375.

INTRODUCTION

“You can tell the condition of the nation by looking at the status of women.” Jawaharlal Nehru has rightly said this. Throughout history and in many societies including India, gender inequality was part and parcel of an accepted male dominated culture. Atrocities and discrimination are the two major problems, which the Indian women face in the present day society. The traditional mentalities of India assume that the place of women is mainly concentrated towards home making. They have been considered as the sex object and inferior to men in different spheres of knowledge. The sex ratio of women:men of India is the lowest in the world. In India, women’s representation in parliament and state assemblies never reached beyond 8-10% in the past. Most of the working women remain outside the organised sector. Violence against women is on the rise. The democratic process in India created awareness among the women about their plightful condition. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian constitution in its preamble, fundamental rights, fundamental duties and directive principles. The constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. The emancipation of women is not a simple matter.

It requires the attitudinal change of the husband, other family members and society as a whole to the women. The community consciousness and bureaucratic efforts are integral parts of the implementation of the programmes. The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of the women, which is the grass root problem. Education leads to enlightenment of mind. It increases the thought process in positive direction. An educated woman can educate complete family and an educated family leads to educated society and an educated society results to educated and developed nation with proper mission and vision. The struggle for gender justice will be slow, strenuous and protracted as the change cannot be brought about easily. It has to be fought at emotional, cognitive and action levels. The struggle has to be carried on within the caste, class, race, religion, everywhere in which man woman relationships figure and matter. Empowerment has multiple, inter related and interdependent dimensions, it can be understood in relation to resources, perceptions, relationship and power. But what does women empowerment means? Women empowerment generally has five components:

- Firstly, Women’s sense of self worth
- Secondly, their right to have and determine choices
- Thirdly, their right to have access to opportunities
- Fourthly, their right to have the power to control their own lives

Corresponding author: Dr. Awa Shukla,
Department of Social Sciences, Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad (Gujarat)

- Lastly, their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a social and economic order.

Census 2011 shows our national sex ratio as 944:1000 and this will lead to detrimental social problems if not corrected. The main reason is female foeticide. A survey reveals that world's malnourished children live in India due to lack of nutritious food available to mothers. Strict measures should be taken for improving the sex ratio and health status of women. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "If you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate entire family." Our predominant patriarchal system doesn't provide enough chances for women to have higher education even if they wish. Girls should be motivated to take up higher education. Universal education for all below a certain age decided should be strictly implemented. There is an urgent necessity of framing gender sensitive curricula at all stages of primary education to address sex stereotyping menace. Education attainment and economic participation are the key constituents in ensuring the empowerment of women. Education is the most important thing in all spheres of activities. Without proper education, women will not be able to fulfil their desires.

Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. Employment of women leads to complete building of independence and self-confidence in women. Sense of economic security is the psychological need of a woman for her own self as well as even the family. Legislatures such as Equal Remuneration Act, Factories Act : Constitutional safeguards such as maternity relief and other provisions should be strictly followed. Poverty eradication policies need to be implemented. Macro economic policies would help in this drive. Through economic empowerment women's emancipation could be realized. Dowry still remains the major reason for all the discrimination and injustice shown to women. Dowry has always been an important part of Hindu marriages. Not only among Hindus, it's evil tentacles are now spreading to other religions also. Although dowry was legally prohibited in 1961 [Dowry Prohibition Act]it continues to be highly institutionalised. Women should be more economically empowered and should be educated properly regarding the various legal provisions such as Section 498ACrPC, protection from domestic violence etc., only then this evil menace could be possibly eradicated from Indian social system.

True empowerment will be reached only when women take part actively in the decision making process of our country. Women Reservation Bill entitles to provide 33% reservation in the Parliament is a bill of utmost importance. The success of 73rd and 74th amendment which reserves certain number of seats for women in the local bodies should be an encouragement for the Bill to be passed at least in this current session. Mainstreaming women's empowerment is central to human development. Empowerment of women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. Empowering women enhances their ability to influence the changes and create a better society. Other than education, changes in women's mobility and social interactions are necessary. Women are one of the greatest assets of our society. They are equal to men in every aspect.

Today, women are emerging as leader in the growing range of fields. Be it Police, defence,, politics, media, administration, engineering, space or research fields. Some qualities to be acquired by women to become truly empowered are awareness about risks prevailing at home, and should also have political, legal and economic awareness. Awareness and voice of women in all burning issues should be promoted. Empowerment of women is one of the areas that is being accorded considerable priority in the process of our country's socio-economic development. Logically speaking the journey towards full empowerment of women would have a number of E factors as its crucial and critical milestones. The defining E's include Equality, Emancipation, Education and Employment. The terms equality and emancipation are basic to empowerment as they connote the freedom to choose cutting across social, economic and political spheres.

In so far as access to education is concerned, the balance tilts clearly in favour of prioritizing on women's education in line with the practical observation. A woman's education or emancipation is not just a social imperative but an economic necessity as well. Indeed the extent of women's empowerment in the national hierarchy is determined largely by the three factors of economic, social and political identities and their respective weight ages. It is only when these three factors are addressed simultaneously and made compatible with each other can the woman be truly regarded as empowered. The Indian constitution, in a number of Articles, reiterates its commitment towards the socio economic development of women while endorsing their political rights and participation in decision making. In this context, some of the critical areas of concern that have been delineated by the Government are those of women and economy, women in power and decision making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, women in armed conflict, violence against women and education and training of women.

Highlights of some steps that can be taken are

- To provide a common platform for women in all fields to interact and discuss their roles and activities for taking up challenges in promoting socio economic development of our nation.
- To identify different areas to which women are less exposed and encourage them to participate more in such untouched or lesser touched fields.
- To involve more women academicians to activate themselves in promotion of education for women.
- To provide a platform for women to have their say on politics of our nation and also conduct training programs for political administration for women.
- To activate all the forums not only to justify the issues of women but strengthen them in right direction.
- To promote media to publicise the steps taken for women empowerment.
- To encourage the media to design programs showing the benefits and steps taken for women empowerment.
- To systematise and publicise the method to avail the plans and schemes for women.
- To promote media initiatives for violence or injustice against women.

- To promote the youth of the nation to stand for women empowerment and gender equality.
- To encourage participation of women in debates and discussions related to various fields.

REFERENCES

- ArunaGoel, Education and socio economic perspectives of Women Development and Empowerment, ISBN 8176294969, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2004.
- Dr. Prachi Singh, Mrs. Shilpi Gupta, Independent Education Management Professional A Conceptual Study on Women Empowerment-Facts and Realities, *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*Volume 11, Issue 4 (May. - Jun. 2013), PP 54-63
- "The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961". Retrieved 24 December 2006.
- MamtaRao, 3rd, 2012, ed. Law Relating to Women & Children (Paperback). pp. 1–640. ISBN 9350286610. "women and the protection provided under various criminal, personal and labour laws in India"
- Carol S. Coonrod June 1998. "Chronic Hunger and the Status of Women in India". Retrieved 24 December 2006.
