

The Silent Contributors - Unfolding the invisible aspect

Ms. Divya Yadav, Assistant Professor,

Department of Commerce, Hindu College, University of Delhi, India.

Abstract

Women are the originators of mankind. The most important sect in the society is often being unrecognised in the shade of patriarchal outlook of the society. The lives of women are undergoing from a huge turmoil. In the times of corona pandemic their efforts are two folded and often been unnoticed. Even after many years of Beijing declaration for Gender equality and women empowerment still today their efforts are unnoticed. The makers of our society needs upliftment and recognition for their efforts. This paper is an attempt to analyse the prevailing challenges women faces in their social, educational, health, economic and political aspects and the key framework to overcome these dimensions loopholes in the long -run.

Key words- Women empowerment , Gender equality

Introduction

As rightly said;

“There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women the condition of women is improved, it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing” – Swami Vivekananda

Women comprising half of the world's population even in 21st century are still struggling with the norms and standards set for them in one form or another. Sometimes regarded as Devi or goddess and at other times considered as invisible section often being disregarded and not given powers in decision making even for herself. Mankind has failed to understand that the women, historic contributor to their success and life path are facing a lot of hurdles which need to be recognised. Women of every sects need to be empowered paving a new road for humanity.

Literally, empowerment means ‘giving power to do something’. So, women empowerment may be described as giving power to women as equal that men have already.

“Women’s empowerment is the process and the outcome of the process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources and challenge the ideology of

patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structure of society". –Srilatha

Empowering women help a family to grow which leads to better society and helps in formation of great nation where every person attains equality in true sense as embodied in our country's Constitution as gender equality is not only the ground laying human right but a platform for a peaceable, wealthy and sustainable world.

Literature Review

Access to education and employment are the only enabling factor, achievement towards women upliftment depends largely on the attitude of people in the society and women herself towards gender equality by giving them decision making power, freedom of movement, access to education and enabling atmosphere devoid of unequal gender norms and domestic violence. (Nayak&Mahanta, 2009)

As per ICRW Report of 2009, innovation presents an exciting pathway for women empowerment through technological use, social – economic change and economic resilience which is the major catalyst in bringing the substantial benefits for hundreds and millions of women.

Ms. Desai (2010) , rightly pointed out that there is no magic bullet for gender equality. A stimulus plan is needed that make it explicit focus on law, justice, policies and ensures economic changes in the government machineries at all levels from transforming patriarchal values into procreating a new vision of human well-being.

A study by Dr. Rajeshwari (2015) , highlights the paradoxical situation of treating women sometimes as goddess and other time as slaves need to be tackled with empowering women and giving them economic , spiritual, educational upliftment and guarding them against violence of all forms.

Equality irrespective of gender is to live with dignity and freedom is the basic requirement to fulfil the millennium development goals. There is a need to look beyond economic resources into cultural and social life in reshaping the women autonomy and empowerment. (Dr . Devi, 2017) .

Empowering women not only in economic sense rather a systematic empowerment in terms of easy law access, health development, education access will help in attaining a nation hundred percent sustainable goals targeted. (Hasin , Hasan &Musa , 2018) .

A major effort in empowering the women is to give them right in decision making at all levels. Empowering them to be treated as equal partners in the society besides addressing their educational, political and social well-being. (Dr . Thanikaival& Dr . Priya, 2018)

Research Methodology

This research paper purely based on secondary form of data being taken from various government websites, analysis of previous literature and based on that a redefined model is being conceptualized across various dimension which leads to empowerment of women.

Constitutional framework towards women upliftment & empowerment.

The founding fathers of Indian constitution greatly emphasised the importance women which they holds since from Vedic eras, their role in India's freedom and to post independent era. To uplift the status of women special provisions were inserted in order to bring parity and opportunities in political, social and economic well-being of nation as a whole. Notable mention of these articles

of Indian Constitution are as follows: -

Article 14- Equality before law

“The state shall not deny any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India”

Article 16(2)- Equal Opportunities

“No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect or, any employment or office under the state”

Article23- Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour

Article39(a) The citizen, men & women equally have the right to adequate means of livelihood.

Article40(after 73rd Amendment)- 1/3rd of seats in panchayats shall be reserved for women.

Article42- State shall make provisions for just and humane working conditions & maternity relief.

Article51A(e)- one of the duties of every citizen is to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Government Policies towards women empowerment

One of the major roles being performed by legislature is to frame laws specially to empowering weaker and venerable sect of the society. Women were often been confined to household boundaries without any financial support in times of emergencies like premature delivery, ill health etc. To make women to stand on their own feet various support schemes are being framed from time to time.

Following are the schemes and programmes for women empowerment:

1. National Rural Health Mission.
2. Janani Suraksha Yojana.
3. Integrated Child Protection Scheme and ICDS.
4. Swadhar- A scheme for women in difficult circumstances.
5. Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
6. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY).
7. Ujjawala- A Scheme for prevention of trafficking and rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration.
8. Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY).
9. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

10. Indira Gandhi Matruva Sahyog Yojana (IGMY)- A conditional maternity benefit scheme.
11. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for empowerment of adolescent girls (RGSEAG)- Sabla.
12. Swayam Siddha.
13. Scheme for working women hostel
14. STEP (Support to training and employment programme for women)
15. Swarna Jayanti gram swarozgar yojana
16. Indira Awaas Yojana.
17. Mahatma Gandhi National rural employment guarantee act (MGNREGA)
18. The national mission for empowerment of women(NMEW)

The effectiveness of these schemes depends largely on proper execution and awareness of its availability especially in rural areas.

- Different Dimensions of women empowerment

Various dimensions ranging from education, health, political and social participation, role in economic progress in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors need to be focused. With the changing times, efforts should be made both at local, government and international levels for empowering women.

Redefine and reconstruct Model in relation to Covid 19 uncertainties for women empowerment.

A lot of efforts are being done and a lot more to be done. Education, health, politics, information and technology, business and its ancillary services need to be refined and reconstructed especially in this COVID 19 uncertainty.

Education

A remarkable progress is being done in imparting primary education in India since independence. As per data, women literacy level in rural areas is 56.8 % compared to 72.3%

among males. Similarly, literacy level of women in Urban India is 79.5% as compared to 83.7% males' literates.

A relatively large gap shows the stereotypes, the families and society hold towards educating a girl child. Since from their birth especially in rural areas they are considered as burden amounting to huge amount of dowry a parent has to give to the engaged families.

Time has changed so should the outlook of society should be redefined and reorganised.

Government Policies towards promoting girls education to disseminate one lakh rupees encourage people to send their daughters to school without much worrying about their future but the actual change will be made by the people only because as the saying goes when a woman is educated, a family get educated which in turn benefits the nation as a whole and leads to progress in right direction with broader outlook the world holds.

Health

Health is another important dimension which is often fails to meet the target projected. During the epidemic, women well-being suffers a lot. Women themselves ignores to have proper nutrition diet in order to feed the children and male members in the family. Illness cases are endless which data numbers fails to predict.

India ranked 129th out of 189 countries in the HDI, 2019 shifted one knot upper which shows that there is a long way ahead to cover.

Restructuring the awareness programmes at ground level should be implemented. During the Covid 19 pandemic, migrant women labourer sufferings are eye opener to frame guidelines in this regard. Various cases of ill – health, pre mature delivery during the transition to their way home, molestation by rich dominant employers' contractors and the list is endless.

Politics

Even though one third participation is being reserved for women by the Parliament, there is few women MPs and MLAs which can be counted on fingers. A reunification of system needs to be addressed. Male patriarch system needs to be redefined. Since from ages women reaped tremendous issues without shedding a tear apart. Participation should be inculcated from the very beginning taking school as a experiment field. In this way, women imbibe a

sense of leading others and making a society having a wisdom and care insight.

Economic well being

Women works 24 ×7 hours even then their efforts are not being recognised. COVID -19 adds more tasks for women. Working women had to double shift, one her office work and other her house work. Tendency of other family members to stereotype the household tasks only for women needs to be redefined as it's not their work, it's our work because all members are the part of the family so helping hand should be involved.

Social context

Even after independence, women are not able to enjoy their equal status with men. Still today women upliftment is often been suppressed. In many under privileged areas, women are treated as slaves by rendering the reference of old age texts. In Manu's code, women were considered as property which a male possess in a way treated as a slave. These contexts can't uphold the validity as women are too human which is being granted a human right even by international community at large. Different ages have different norms but what matters is norms should not be biased towards a particular stratum. Restrictions not to stay outside for longtime, regarding clothes to wear, not to smile too loud, to sit in a particular posture and the list goes on.

Crime

Various penal provisions especially related to sexual offenses in Indian Penal Code of 1860 are amended after Nirbhayacase. The difficulty lies is their proper implementation. Women are not well educated about their own rights. The silence of women provides opportunities for such perpetrators. The constant eve teasing, mental torture, psycial and psychological domestic torture need to be addressed at the earliest. The awareness programmes with the help of NGOs, women counsellor should be appointed at each district in order to prevent the crime against women rather than curing with penalties & punishment later on.

Dimension	Redefined Approach
Education	Reduce Stereotypes
Heath	Policies measures
Economic well being	Opportunities inculcated
Social context	Recognition of work of women
Crime	Awareness to be spread

SPORA model helps in imbibing optimistic culture towards women in the society. A nation is able to exploit the undermined utilities of their major human resources leading to progressive growth and novelties across generations to come.

Suggestions and Conclusion

Its not a denying fact that a lot has been done in order to uplift and empower women at every front but a long way is ahead to cover to bring parity & equity stake in their personal as well as work lives. Recently various campaigns were being organised like “Orange the World “campaign by UN agencies to end violence against women around the world , Kerala “Night Walk” initiative to promote women empowerment are worthy to create general awareness among women about their rights and to promote a life with dignity as guaranteed by our Indian Constitution in the prevailing pandemic .To boost up leadership skills and economic independence women entrepreneurs are given credit at ease besides CSR initiatives for women in rural areas .

Apart from government regulations & policies measures joint efforts of general public is paramount to note. A little change in way of living and giving credit for work to women, be she is a mother,sister, wives or maids.

Some efforts create a ripple effect and leads to more prosperous and healthier environment

for women.

-By fixing a day in a week when all the activities which are done by women are divided among family members to make them also feel special apart from Mother's Day and sister's day celebrations.

-Feedback on women related legislative matters by bringing e-platform completely for women.

-Educational curriculum should be revised so as to sensitise/familiarise the younger generation. This would be helpful in long term as children

-Movies like chak de India, English Vinglish a decision to learn English language change the way Shashi sees herself and wants other to see her.

--Mandatory audio-visual techniques such as movies, documentaries etc. depicting women empowerment can used to create awareness.

-To guarantee women led development, women should be included in planning not only sectors like social development, but also sectors like infrastructure, use of common lands, natural resources and employments.

Opportunities should be created for women to empower and its awareness should be done side by side so that they can and feel what empowerment is in actual terms .

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