

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:- GENDER EQUALITY WITH REFERENCE TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract : It is veracious that the concept of gender equality has depicted in poles apart ways throughout the Indian history. In Manu Smruthi, it has designated that “*Yatra naryastu pujoyante ramante tatra Devata, yatra itaastu na pujoyante sarvaastatrafalaah kriyaah*” it means “whenever women are given their due respect, even the deities like to reside there and where they are not respected, all action remains unfruitful.” But it was truly persisted in Vedic India. The Vedic period encountered fir gender equalities, women granted an equal rank compared to men and they had enjoyed a great liberty in an outright of socioeconomic and financial aspects of Vedic era. This study is basically about the empowerment of women to assessing the traditional perspective towards gender equality and how the Vedic India can be an epitome for modern India in eradication of gender disparities and other issues. “Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity.” – *Mahatma Gandhi* But today have distinguished themselves and have made their identity and presence in all spheres of life. They form an integral part of the society and make a significant contribution to the development of the nation. “Women perform 66% of the world’s work, and produce 50% of the food, yet earn only 10% of the income and own 1% of the property. Whether the issue is improving education in the developing world, or fighting global climate change, or addressing nearly any other challenge we face, empowering women is a critical part of the equation”. Some issues relating to women’s economic empowerment are particularly challenging or sensitive. These challenges need to be acknowledged and discussed. It will take sound policies, a holistic approach and long-term commitment from all development sectors to achieve women’s economic empowerment. It will never be a “quick fix”.

Key words: Gender Equality, Gender Disparity, Sound Policies, Women empowerment

Introduction:- Firstly I want to start with the quote by *Roseanne Barr* “The thing women have yet to learn is nobody gives you power. You just take it.” The paper focus on issues, why do women require empowerment? Is it a right step to establish equality between men and women? The reasons for or rationale behind empowerment of women. A study on the law relating to women empowerment in the national and international perspective. The persistence of gender inequalities directly result in poorer agricultural and human development outcomes. A study conducted in four African countries showed that providing women farmers with the same quantity and quality of inputs that men typically receive, and improving their access to agricultural education, could increase national agricultural output and incomes by an estimated 10% to 20%.

Issues: denial of right to survival: In India, health and well-being of a girl child is at risk from the time of conception. Although, overall mortality rates have declined, high female mortality persists up to the age of 35 years, at every age level. Differential health care, education and nutritional status, and existing cultural beliefs and practices are some of the factors responsible for higher female mortality. In the country, every year 12 million girls are born, but despite being biologically stronger than boy, 3 million girls do not survive to see their 15th birthday. About 1/3 of these deaths are in the first year of life. It is

estimated that every sixth female death is due to gender discrimination. Female feticide and infanticide are the most hideous outcome of sex discrimination. Son preferences a deep rooted social value combined with poverty, illiteracy and low status of girls are among the few of the factors associated with female mortality before and at birth. ‘Sex preferences’ in other terms, also means an ‘unconscious neglect’ of a girl child.

Family Violence: Adolescent girls are vulnerable to all kinds of violence, be it physical, social or economic. Cruelties on wife, sexual harassment and bride burning have devastating consequences on the girl’s physical and mental health. Women are the predominant victims of conflict, sexual violence, injury, death, intimidation and human trafficking

- Lack of adequate access to education, training and technology
- Lack of access to clean water, sanitation
- Lack of access to responsible health care/reproductive health (one of the costs of widely available pre-natal screening in India has been the selective abortion of female fetuses, 10 million in the past two decades - this has led to one of the most skewed gender ratios.
- Lack of access to credit/finance, safe work conditions, living/minimum wages
- Cultural practices, tradition, religious interpretations of women's status

- Women's lack of knowledge about rights and laws (economic, social, political, religious)
- Lack of adequate representation in decision-making positions and governance structures
- Need for comprehensive global statistical data on the informal economy and the collection of gender-specific data. Must be analyzed to bring out the linkages between informal employment, poverty and gender inequality. The real tragedy is that women are often better economic stewards of capital than men. Research has shown that women are more likely to reinvest profits back into human capital than are men. When women have economic power - defined as control of income and capital (land, livestock, etc.)-they gain more equality and control over their own lives, while contributing directly to their children's development (nutrition, health and education) and thereby indirectly to their nation's income growth.

Women's economic empowerment could ease corruption and violence, promote greater environmental sustainability, and through education, contraception, and lower fertility rates, help lower HIV/AIDS rates. If this kind of process is accepted by society, then it should be apparent that women's education and economic empowerment is not only a matter of human rights but also human security. On this specific issue, Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen writes; *"Human Security is integrally connected with securing human capability, and thus applies directly to the contribution of education in removing the "downside risks" among the general class of objectives included under the broad hat of human development. Human Security stands, thus on the shoulders of human development with a particular adaptation of rich vision and perspective, and this applies especially strongly to the critical role of elementary education"*.

Structure of Incorporating Motivation:

- To understand the position of women in the Indian economy.
- To appreciate the contribution of women in socio-economic development.
- To identify the social, cultural, educational and administrative barriers to women's productivity.
- To get familiar with the ongoing programs and schemes of development sector for raising the socio-economic status of women and also the legal provision of safeguarding their participating in economy.

Solutions: Empowerment of women:

The main tool of women's empowerment and the parameters of this are:

- Enhance self esteem and self confidence of women.

- Building a positive image of women by recognizing their contribution to the society, polity and the economy.
- Developing ability to think critically
- Fostering decision making and action through collective processes
- Enable women to make choices in areas like education, employment and health.
- Ensuring equal participation in developmental process
- Providing information, knowledge and skills for economic independence
- Enhancing access to legal literacy and information relating to their rights and entitlements in society with a view to enhance their participation on an equal footing in all areas.

Steps and policies by Human Resources Development, GOI to be adopted for empowerment;

- Adopt political and development policies to reduce gender disparities.
- Empower community through advocacy and social mobilization using traditional and nontraditional media.
- Strengthen Programme Delivery System and improve reach and utilization of services to meet health, nutrition and education needs of the women at all levels.
- Accord women her rights.
- Formulate a plan to counteract negative images of women and existing beliefs and practices.
- Free the women from household responsibilities.
- Promote research on the women
- Setup decentralized monitoring and evaluation system.
- Set up a network with voluntary organizations.
- Mobilize resources for the cause of the women.

Conclusion :-Men's work ends at setting sun, yet women's work is never done". Women represent half the world's population, and gender inequality exists in every nation on the planet. To discriminate and prevent half of humanity from reaching its full potential is economic folly. Denying women and girls equality and fairness not only hurts them, but also hinders the rest of society. Women are the nation's assets and pivot for humankind. Give her opportunities to develop, as her development is the development of the society and the nation. Society which considers her an asset and gives her the freedom of making her own destiny.

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