
STATUS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

CHALLA SRINIVAS

Abstract: Women empowerment is a debatable subject. At earlier time they were getting equal status with men. But they had faced some difficulties during post-Vedic and epic ages. Many a time they were treated as slave. From early twenty Century (national movement) their statuses have been changed slowly and gradually. In this regard, we may mention the name of the British people. After then, independence of India, the constitutional makers and national leaders strongly demand equal social position of women with men. Today we have seen the women occupied the respectable positions in all walks of the fields. Yet, they have not absolutely freed some discrimination and harassment of the society. A few numbers of women have been able to establish their potentialities. Therefore, each and every one should be careful to promote the Women statuses.

Keywords: Empowerment, Hrd, Cedaw, Ncw, Mhrd.

Introduction: Empowerment of women involves many things – economic opportunity, property rights, political representation, social equality, personal rights and so on. The Indian society is a patriarchal system in which women's position within the structure and duties towards the family precede their rights as individuals. Many who argue for empowerment of women do so either with or without a full understanding of the conflicts between the historical and contemporary status of women in the patriarchy and the goals of empowerment. Certainly we may track a great many changes that have occurred in the direction of change in the status of women in India but women have yet to achieve or realize many of the ideal stages of social, psychological, economic and political empowerment. Hence it is certainly more appropriate to define empowerment as a process rather than an end-point. Empowerment by means of education, literacy, modest income-generating projects is clearly insufficient to ameliorate the prospects for a higher quality of the life for women. The process or empowerment is taking place at so many levels that it is quite difficult to gauge the actual nature and extent of empowerment in improving status of women. Certainly, the process is entangled in the struggle of civil society against the state and under the weight of historical practice and ongoing debates over the appropriate role of ideologies.

Objective of the Study: The Main objective of the paper brings about the Policy and advancement, development and empowerment of women. The Policy will be widely disseminated so as to encourage active participation of women.

Methodology: The present study completely based on secondary data collected from HRD, CEDAW NFHS, Census of India, Registrar, and General in India,

Women Status in India: Now the women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with the men as per

Constitutional and legal provision. But the Indian women have come a long way to achieve the present positions. First, gender inequality in India can be traced back to the historic days of Mahabharata when Draupadi was put on the dice by her husband as a commodity. History is a witness that a woman was made to dance both in private and public places to please the man. Secondly, in Indian society, a female was always dependent on male members of the family even last few years ago. Thirdly, a female was not allowed to speak with loud voice in the presence of elder members of her in laws. In the family, every faults had gone to her and responsible. Forth, as a widow her dependence on a male member of the family still more increase. In many social activities she is not permitted to mix with other members of the family. Other hand, she has very little share in political, social and economic life of the society. The early twenty century, it was rise of the National Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi who was in favor of removing all the disabilities of women.

After independence of India, the constitution makers and the national leaders recognized the equal social position of women with men. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has determined the age for marriage, provided for monogamy and guardianship of the mother and permitted the dissolution of marriage under specific circumstances. Under the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, an unmarried women, widow or divorcee of sound mind can also take child in adoption. Similarly, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 says that any person who gives, takes, or abets the giving or taking of dowry shall be punished with imprisonment, which may extend to six months or fine up to Rs.5000/ or with both. The Constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special favors to women. These can be found in three articles of the constitution. Article 14 says that the government shall

not deny to any person equality before law or equal protection of the law. Article 15 declares that government shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex. Article 15 (3) makes a special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in favor of women. Article 42 directs the state to make provision for ensuring just and human conditions of work and maternity relief. Above all, the constitution regards a fundamental duty on every citizen through Articles 15 (A), (E) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Women - Cultural problems:

Gender specific specialization (work)
Cultural definition of appropriate sex roles
Expectation of role within relationship
Belief in the inherent superiority of males
Customs of marriage (Bride price/Dowry)
Notion of the family as the private sphere and under male control
Value that give proprietary right over women and girls.

Women-Economic problems:

Limited access to cash and credit
Limited access to employment in formal and informal sector.
Limited access to education.

Women-Educational Problems: Indian women still constitute a large body of under - privileged citizens. Women of course do not form a homogenous group in class or caste terms. Nevertheless, they face distinctive problems that call for special attention. The Backward Classes Commission set up by the Government of India in 1953 classified women of India as a backward group requiring special attention. The Ministry of Education clubs girls with Scheduled Castes and Tribes as the three most backward groups in education. The educational, economic, political and social backwardness of women makes them the largest group hindering the process of social change. It is inevitable that when this 'backward' group has the major responsibility of bringing up future generations the advancement of society cannot be rapid or take any significant form of development. In the report of the committee appointed by the National Council for Women's Education it was emphatically stated that what was needed to convert the equality of women from de jure to de facto status was widespread education for girls and women and a re-education of men and women to accept new and scientific attitudes towards each other and to themselves.

Empowerment of Women in India: The concept of empowerment flows from the power. It is vesting where it does not exist or exist inadequately. Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent, self-reliant,

have positive esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation and they should be able to participate in development activities. The empowered women should be able to participate in the process of decision making. In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD-1985) and the National Commission for Women (NCW) have been worked to empowerment of women India.

Women Empowerment in India: A Brief

Discussion: Safeguard the rights and legal entitlement of women. The 73rd & 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of India have provided some special powers to women that for reservation of seats (33%), whereas the report HRD as March 2011 shows that the legislatures with the highest percentage of women in India "The New Panchayati Raj" is the part of the effort to empower women at least at the village level. The government of India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights to women. These are CEDAW (1993), the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for Action (1995) and other such instruments. The year of 2001 was observed as the year of women's empowerment. During the year, a landmark document has been adopted, 'the National Policy for the empowerment of women.' For the beneficiaries of the women, the government has been adopted different schemes and programs i.e. the National Credit Fund for Women (1993), Food and Nutrition Board (FNB), Information and Mass Education (IME) etc. The most positive development last few years has been the growing involvement of women in the Panchayati Raj institutions. There are many elected women representatives at the village council level. At present all over India. At the central and state levels too women are progressively making a difference. Today we have seen women chief ministers, women president, different political parties leader, well establish businessmen etc. Women are being regarded these days as a sine-quo-none of progress for a country.

Reasons for the Empowerment of Women: Today we have noticed different Acts and Schemes of the central government as well as state government to empower the women of India. But in India women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education, and also reproductive healthcare. Women are found to be economically very poor all over the India. A few women are engaged in services and other activities. So, they need economic power to stand on their own legs on par with men. Other hand, it has been observed that women are found to be less literate than men. According to 2011 Census, rate of

literacy among men in India is found to be 82.14% whereas it is only 65.46% among women. Thus, increasing education among women is of very important in empowering them. It has also noticed that some of women are too weak to work. They consume less food but work more. Therefore, from the health point of view, women folk who are to be weaker are to be made stronger. Another problem is that workplace harassment of women. There are so many cases of rape, kidnapping of girl, dowry harassment, and so on. For these reasons, they require empowerment of all kinds in order to protect themselves and to secure their purity and dignity. To sum up, women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come with and help to self-empower themselves. There is a need to formulate reducing feminized poverty, promoting education of women, and prevention and elimination of violence against women.

Conclusion: Training should be given to women for capacity building among them. Women should be taught not to keep undue pressure of their family members. Workshops and seminars should be organised by the Government for regular interaction among women representatives across districts and states. Such interaction would help them to exchange their ideas on performance and failure of local self-government institutional frame work. Adequate information relating to various programmes and activities including economic incentive oriented schemes promoted by the Government should be made available to women for their knowledge and involvement and implementation of such schemes, programmes etc. Majority of women had no independent source of earning. . It is suggested that the Government should run programmes of such kind wherein the programmes generate independent income earning status of women.

References:

1. Census of India (2011): www.censusindia.gov.nic.in
2. UNDP Report, 1990.
3. Mohiuddin, Yasmeen (1995): Country Rankings of Women's Status: An alternative Index, Pakistan Development review winter.
4. Women's Rights Conventions, Manifesto, Seneca Falls, 1848
5. Justice V.R.Krishalyer "Human Right to be Woman" , Women March towards dignity, Socio-legal Perspectives (ed by Kusum) Regency Publications, New Delhi. 1993.
6. Hegel George, "Philosophy and Nature" ed by M.J.Petry, 1970
7. The Law of Manu, Chp. IX. V3, 328, 1964.
8. MalladiSubbamma, Status of Indian Women, MalladiSubbamma Trust, Hyderabad 1994 p 43.
9. Aristotle, "The Generation of Animals in the Basic works of Aristotle" (ed. By Richard Makeon, 1941), Book 1, Chapter 20.
10. Justice Krishna Iyer "Human Right to be Woman, Women-March Towards Dignity, Social and Legal Perspectives Ed. Kusum, Regency Publications, New Delhi 1993 p 1

Challa Srinivas/ Research Scholar/ Department of Economics/ Kakatiya University/ Warangal/Telangana /
Srinivas.challai@gmail.com /9449211121