

STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY IN OVERCOMING THE DISPARITIES IN THE SOCIETY

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Abstract: The status of Indian women has undergone considerable change. Though Indian women are far more independent and aware of their legal rights, such as right to work, equal treatment, property and maintenance, a majority of women remain unaware of these rights. There are other factors that affect their quality of life such as age of marriage, extent of literacy, role in the family and so on. Those who are economically independent and literate live the kind of life that other women tend to envy about. Gender equality and women empowerment both are multi dimensional social process. Gender is seen closely related to the roles and behavior assigned to women and men based on their sex difference. Gender equality, for all human beings, is to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by their strict gender roles, that the different aspirations and need of women and men are considered valued and favored equality..

All over the world, 8th March, Is celebrated as International Women's Day. But, gender equality is proclaimed as fundamental right by the United Nations' Charter in 1945. However, years before this signing, women in San Francisco rose up in arms for their rights as early in 1912, there was a strike by total workers for equality. Indian constitution in its preamble fundamental rights, fundamental Duties and Directive Principle. The constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers them. In India, provisions of various Article, legal provision and various schemes and programmes of government promote gender equality and empowerment.

Introduction: Gender' is a socio-cultural term referring socially defined roles and behaviors assigned to 'males' and 'females' in a given society; whereas, the term 'sex' is a biological and physiological phenomenon which defines man and woman. Gender Inequality, in simple words, may be defined as discrimination against women based on their sex. Women are traditionally considered by the society as weaker sex. She has been accorded a subordinate position to men. She is exploited, degraded, violated and discriminated both in our homes and in outside world.

Empowering women in India is very necessary to bring gender equality. Women's are the wealth of India and they have contributed in almost every field and made country feel proud at every occasion. 21st century is consider as Empowerment of women though this journey is not as smooth. This county is man dominated county and workplace is also consider as man dominated place. Sexual Harassment is crime against women and she is continually victimise. Being a victor in the courtroom rather than a victim in the discrimination. This paper is focusing on how such crime is hurdle in the journey of empowerment of women which ultimately cannot reach the goal of gender equality.

21st century is consider as Empowerment of women though this journey is not as smooth. Empowering women is empowering humanity. This country is men dominated country and workplace is also considered as male dominated place. Sexual Harassment is crime against women and she is continuously victimise.

Being a victor in the courtroom rather than a victim in the workplace can be daunting and expensive task for a woman when faced with gender discrimination. This paper is focusing on how such crime is hurdle in the journey of empowerment of women which ultimately cannot reach the goal of gender equality.

Discrimination is start before the birth the of female child, love for a male child is so much so that from the times immemorial we are killing our daughters at birth or before birth, and if, fortunately, she is not killed we find various ways to discriminate against her throughout her life. Though our religious beliefs make women a goddess but we fail to recognize her as a human being first; we worship goddesses but we exploit girls.

According to Cambridge English Dictionary, Empowerment means 'to authorize'. In the context of the people, they have to be authorized to have control over their own lives. When applied in the context of development of the particular segment of population, the women have to be 'empowered' to have control over their own lives to better their socio-economic and political conditions. Thus, women empowerment can be interpreted as totality of empowerment including political, social, cultural, and other dimension of human life as also the physical, moral and intellectual. Economic empowerment of women unlocks the door for modernization of any society. Violence against women is experienced by women of all ages and social classes, all races, religions and nationalities, all over the world. It is overwhelmingly perpetrated by

men. It is the most pervasive violation of human rights in the world today. Its forms are both subtle and blatant and its impact on development profound. Women's empowerment is through education and employment. If place of employment is not safe than how women can economically become independent because these both gender equality and empowerment of women issues is the two side of coin. The impact of this crime is very high. It affect not only physically but also it mentally affect the victim. And irony is that women is continuously victim of this heinous crime. It is true that economic independent give her right to live dignity but where as hostile work environment is there she can not work with full efforts. Meal dominated society who suppose to the master of the society not ready to give her right to live dignity which is enriched in constitution and in various laws also. Which generated gender equity. We are a society of people with double-standards as far as our attitude towards women is concerned; our thoughts and preaching are different than our actions. To change the scenario and if in real sense empower the women then this hurdle must be remove not only on record on files but by changing our mindset which ultimately Empower women: empower humanity become effective.

The end of the Cold War, emergence of a global economy and rapid technological changes are all having unprecedented impact on various organs and sections of the community. The full and long term impact of these changes is beyond comprehension at this stage. As a result of this changing environment, many critical national issues, such as population, financial markets, environment, technology transfer, human rights, that once would have been handled within national boundaries have been globalised (Sen, 1991), which, in many ways, are restricting the sovereign power of individual nation – states.

The structural adjustment policies, pursued by the multilateral agencies, with full endorsement of the G7 countries, have elements such as demand restraint, price decontrol, reform of trade regimes, financial sector reform, privatization (Stewart, 1992). These impinge on the living conditions of all people, most advesely on low to middle – income people and in particular on women, as public investment in human resources and cuts in social expenditure take place (Elson, 1987). The rapid emergence of contract work, longer work shifts, dominance of part – time employment are few such examples. Sufferings endured by the Indonesian women and children, following their recent political and economic crises are an example. The women's movement cannot operate by ignoring this situation.

Around the world, violence and discrimination against women and girls violates their human rights and severely compromises young people's sexual and

reproductive health. Harmful practices, including female genital cutting/mutilation, femicide, gender-based violence, and early marriage, damage girls' physical being and self-worth by reinforcing gender-based marginalization and inequality. Gender inequalities and biases pervade cultures worldwide, preventing women and girls from fully realizing their rights to reproductive health and equality

The issue of gender inequality can be considered as a universal feature of developing countries. Unlike women in developed countries who are, in relative terms, economically empowered and have a powerful voice that demands an audience and positive action, women in developing countries are generally silent and their voice has been stifled by economic and cultural factors. Economic and cultural factors, coupled with institutional factors dictate the gender-based division of labour, rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and access to and control over resources. Education, literacy, access to media, employment, decision making, among other things, are some of the areas of gender disparity. Increase in education has often been cited as one of the major avenues through which women are empowered. Education increases the upward socio-economic mobility of women; creates an opportunity for them to work outside the home; and enhances husband-wife communication. In Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), school attendance ratio and literacy rate are used as measures of education. The former shows the ratio of girls'school attendance to that of boys'

Gender inequality is the question here. The reality of gender inequality in India, origin of gender inequality and how to deactivate it are discussed in this paper. This starts with the state of gender based inequality in the modern India. It presents some facts and figures representing the inequality practiced in India and its comparison with other Asian and Western countries. The effects of the diversified culture and differences on the inequality in general are explained first. The origin of the inequality and the effect of modern technologies in controlling the gender in population are briefly described. The route to the present scenario is explained to show the importance and influence of the origin of the problem and India's cultural background. The different areas where the inequality is felt and problems they face in each of those areas are explained. The strategies and initiatives being done by different groups and society in general are described to show the progress happening in India to reduce the problem of gender inequality.

The gender inequality faced by women was so much that many women claimed May God give sons to all. This is a fact and India has witnessed gender inequality from its early history due to its socio-

economic and religious practices that resulted in a wide gap between the position of men and women in the society. Clearly, then gender gaps that are widespread in access to basic rights, access to and control of resources, in economic opportunities and also in power and political voice are an impediment to development.

The popular interpretations of Hindu mythology have very fixed views on how women should behave; things like being obedient and being a good housewife and mother. In the Ramayana, Ram is a model for how men should act and Sita is the model for women. Unfortunately, these play a part in perpetuating sexism and violence against women in India today. If we focus on Hindu mythology, because 80% of Indians are Hindus and even non-Hindus are impacted by it, the religions in India view women in a similar light; they are not allowed to be independent. In some ways, these attitudes are used to justify violence against women. They blame the woman by saying she didn't behave like Sita. If she did, she would be fine. In India, a sex-selection phenomenon has been in place since the 1980s, with men born during this period now at marriageable age. Then the urbanization since the 1990s where a lot of families and men have moved to cities to look for work. People are much wealthier but at the same time there's pressure to produce sons as an heir, so educated, wealthy families are now more likely to have sex selection. All these factors are coming to play and creating this toxic mixture, which has turned violence against women into a bigger issue today. India's social structure is a unique blend of diverse religions, cultures and racial groups with the great religion of the world, viz, the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, etc, are found here. The 18 major literary languages, apart from numerous other languages and dialects adds to it. This leads to a striking diversity between various communities and groups in kinships and marriages rites, customs, inheritance and modes of living. Diversity is also seen in the pattern of rural as well as urban settlements,

community life, cultural and social behaviour as also in the institutional framework.

In the ancient India women were held in high esteem and the position of a woman in the Vedas and the Upanishads was that of a mother (maata) or goddess (Devi). In the Manusmriti, woman was considered as a precious being and in the early Vedic age, girls were looked after with care. Then practice of polygamy deteriorated the status of woman and in the medieval period, the practices of purdha system, dowry and sati came into being. With the passage of time, the status of woman was lowered. After the development of science and technology, female foeticide is being practiced on a large scale. This has led to a drop in the female ratio. According to the census 2001, the sex ratio in India is 927 females to 1,000 males. And then dowry have become common and started Female infanticide practices in few areas. In many parts of India, women are viewed as an economic liability despite contribution in several ways to our society and economy. The crime graph against women is increasing at an alarming rate. The condition of an Indian widow is quite deplorable. At home, the woman's contribution towards home as a housewife is not recognized. Domestic Violence, Rape, Sexual Exploitation, molestation, eve-teasing, forced prostitution, sexual harassment at work places etc are a common affair today and in some cases it's too tragic that it gets the global attention. The major reasons for this inequality are identified as the need of a male heir for the family, huge dowry, continued financial support to girl child, poverty, domestic violence, farming as major job for poor and the caste system.

At work, this disparity is visible through a different working environment for women, unequal wages, undignified treatment, sexual harassment, higher working hours, engagement in harmful industries, occupational hazards, working roughly twice as many hours as men and a nearly 27 percentage of women are accounted by unpaid activities. Violence against women is also prominent in India which leads to every 42 minutes a sexual harassment occurring.

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