
WOMEN AND POVERTY

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Abstract: Incapability of achieving the basic needs, dependent on other to livelihood, holding second status in society are main things which denote the poverty in women, its concerned that in situation of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, , training and opportunities for employment and other needs. Women and poverty are closely related to women and empowerment. Poverty in women associated towards the lack of participation of women on various economic and political interaction, caused of which rooted in domestic level behaviour with girls. This is also caused from socio cultural pattern of behaviour in social environment, which also occur due to race, ethnic, sex, religion, geographical aspects. The poverty of feminisation take depth detail of the effect of historical events, policies, planning and various view of international conferences towards the women development. All are broadly explain the relation of poverty and women and how both are connected and affect on women. Inequality is the inherent in nature and at social atmosphere and women suffered than more. women's poor aspect exist at every step whether she as an under wage labour category either she is a domestic level worker without wage, she hold less satisfaction with their status which contrasted with Rights of Women.

Key Word: Need, Opportunity

Introduction: Gender dimensions of poverty often gain significance from the notion that women constitute the poorest of the poor, being the lowest in social and economic hierarchies. However, gender and poverty are two distinct forms of disadvantage and therefore, collapsing them into a 'feminisation of poverty' notion of women as the poorest of the poor is not adequate (Jackson and Palmer – Jones, 2000). A frequently made link between gender and poverty is the equation of women headed households with the poor (Chant, 2003; Gangopadhyay and Wadhwa, 2003; Pearce, 1978; among others). Female headed households are necessarily poorer and suffer from vulnerabilities when compared with those of male headed households (Gangopadhyay and Wadhwa, 2003). However, it would not be correct to state that all female headed households are poor. In fact, many more female headed households fall into the relatively higher consumption expenditure quintiles. It is true that the proportion of female heads working compared to the overall female work participation rates is higher, since in most cases the female head is the active earner of the family. Since the 1980s, studies on the proliferation of female-headed households and research into the social impacts and gender-specific effects of structural adjustment policies have led to increased attention to what has become known as "the feminization of poverty". The perception is growing around the globe that poverty is becoming increasingly feminized, that is, that an increasing proportion of the world's poor are female. Poverty is an income based concept, defined and measured through the household as a unit. Difficulties in access to accurate income data and the arguments that stress on the significance of consumption as a proxy for household standard of

living emphasise the latter to be a better measure of well being than income (World Bank, 1990). Current consumption (including consumption from own production) reflects the ability of the household to buffer their standard of living through saving and borrowing, despite income fluctuations. Therefore, household consumption expenditure as a proxy acts as the data for calculation of per capita consumption. This is then used to designate the poor using poverty lines as benchmarks. There are various problems with such measures of poverty, but the relevant one in this context is regarding the intra-household inequalities in consumption that studies have noted and that may be deduced to operate under the stronghold of patriarchal values that govern the household functioning, thereby discriminating against women. Women tend to be doubly burdened by poverty thereby enhancing their vulnerability significantly. The pressure to seek market forms of employment among poorer women is intensified by the need for the additional contribution to the household income (Mitra and Pool, 2000). The stereotypical role casting whereby women have the responsibility of providing for certain basic amenities in fact constrains their availability for paid work as well. In some households where cultural norms and taboos prevent public participation of women as wage earners in the labour market, the burden of reducing costs by deploying their own labour services to avoid market purchases puts women under tremendous stress. Apart from the gender based division of labour within the domestic spheres, market jobs are also gendered in ways that result in discrimination against women in terms of employment and wage returns. There are very few women who have better human capital endowments and find themselves in the high-end jobs. Even these

few women are mostly those who belong to the well-to-do sections of society. While the overall demographic profile reflects a female deficit in the sex ratio, the share of females is observed to be higher among the households with lower monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE), irrespective of rural and urban areas. In other words, the numbers of women in poorer households exceed that of the males. The poorer households measured by their clearly shows this oft-referred statement which forms the base demographic factor for feminisation of poverty. Basic amenities and lack of access to these, forms one significant dimension of poverty. There is no doubt that urban areas on an average are better off in terms of most basic amenities, when compared to rural counterparts. The 2001 census reports location of source of drinking water within premises in 65 per cent households, which is only 29 per cent in villages. In 25 per cent cases, urban households report the source of drinking water being located near their premises, while in 9 per cent households the location is at a distance. In urban areas, especially for the poorer households, the issue is not as much of location of source as it is of access to and supply adequacy issues.

Conclusion: Analysis of women's poverty, employment and well being are highlighted. Given the poverty line estimations provided by the Planning Commission Expert Group, the actual numbers of poor are increasing in urban areas while it is clearly declining in rural villages. The compound growth rate

of poverty estimates in actual numbers over 1993-94 to 2004-05 are higher for females than for males. Women in urban areas are also affected due to poverty as well as the gender based discriminations. The analysis based on data over 1993-94 and 2004-05 emphasises the need for specific focus on urban poor women, given the increasing incidence of poverty in terms of absolute numbers of poor women and the higher compound growth rate. Further the head count ratio of poverty among female headed households is higher in urban areas compared to the male headed households. Even the demographic gender composition or sex ratios among different expenditure quintiles reveal a higher or more equitable gender balance among the poorer households in both rural and urban locations. This naturally also means that women bear the brunt of poverty much more in comparison to men. Apart from this gender balance in the populations, the societal biases stemming from the patriarchal values discriminates and assigns undue burden on poor women who have to shoulder the domestic responsibilities as well as economic work. Without adequate educational attainments the employment avenues available to them remain informal, low paying and highly insecure. The lack of access to basic amenities and civil rights to the poor migrants who seek livelihood in urban areas makes their working and living conditions very vulnerable, and women among the poor suffer most due to this.

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