

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**RAMESHA**

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Abstract:

The empowerment of women is a crucial catalyst for societal progress and sustainable development. This abstract provides a concise overview of a comprehensive study that explores the multifaceted dimensions of women's empowerment and its impact on overall development. The research encompasses an analysis of socio-economic, cultural, and political factors influencing the status of women in various communities.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Development, Socio-economic factors, Cultural factors.

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment and development are integral components of sustainable progress in any society. Over the years, there has been a growing recognition of the pivotal role that women play in shaping the economic, social, and political landscapes. Empowering women not only contributes to their individual well-being but also has far-reaching effects on communities and nations at large.

When we look at the issue of women's empowerment, women's empowerment is only heard in writings, speeches and some feminist theories, but the real situation is in a different form. In Indian culture, women are often referred to as mothers, pillars of the family, venerable goddesses,

Shakti Daini, etc. In Hindu mythology, the earth is called Bhudevi, India is called Bharatambe, Karnataka is called Kannadambe and the rivers flowing in the country are said to be women. But unfortunately women were not given ownership rights over them. A male-dominated society that values women has trapped her in a legal system created by itself. The great strangeness is that in ManuSmriti, wherever a woman is worshipped, there reside the deities." Also Manu says that it is 'Mother Goddess'. Manu also says that women are unfit for freedom. So they have been pronouncing women according to their needs.

A woman is seen as just an object and she has a mind. She did not see in the feeling that she was human. Since the time

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of Rigva, women have been seen as inferior. Women have come to be reflected as untouchables, unpaid laborers. It is a fiction that a male dominated society, which hides the fact that women are the pillars of the family and sees them as mere objects of luxury, lays the foundation for women's empowerment. The epics of the country like Ramayana and Exploitation of women is depicted in Mahabharata. The characters of Sita and Daupadi make the social status of women stand in question for the viewer.

The biggest contribution to the civilization of India is the appreciation of women in the Indus civilization. It is not known what honor status should be given to women. Exploitation of women in the name of social values and religious beliefs is against the principle of equality. The efforts of Buddha, Basava and Ambedkar who came later in bringing the position of women to a higher level are significant. Even during the British era, the condition of women did not improve much, some superstitions were changed and the exploitation of women did not decrease. But it was Jyothibha Pule who laid a solid foundation for women empowerment in India, whose goal of education for women was at the forefront of women empowerment. After independence, women's empowerment was given arms through several writings, it is a pity that it was limited to just an article.

There is not only gender discrimination in the family, community and society; there is also discrimination at work. What

women should drink, wear, what work they should do. Factors such as having to roam everywhere have created gulfs between women and men. At the base of these are built ladders. Gender inequalities have made women marginalized in society. In the name of women's empowerment, efforts are still being made to take women to Kestera. It is not known whether the empowerment of women is going on in recent days, or whether there are efforts to hold a woman in a tight fist when she is independent.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Investigate the impact of socio-economic factors on women's empowerment.
- Examining women's empowerment within the framework of development.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The discourse surrounding women's empowerment has gained significant traction recently, underscoring its growing gravity and relevance. Despite concerted efforts by women who, after millennia of oppression, have sought to assert their identity and unlock their potential, success has proven elusive. Anti-feminist behaviors may be contributing to this challenge. While women in the past grappled with issues such as child marriage, sati, restricted educational opportunities, and cultural constraints, contemporary challenges encompass excessive societal pressures, sexual harassment, and the exploitations of

modern lifestyles. Despite noteworthy progress in various fields, the term "women empowerment" has become a pervasive reference for the collective journey of women in contemporary society.

In 1971, a committee was appointed to survey the status of women in India. Report submitted in 1974. This gave more punch to the empowerment struggle of the 1980s. Women's Equality before Independence, Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his Young India in 1929 giving priority to women's equality. In this regard, Nehru recognized the role of women in economic projects as the chairman of the National Plan. He also hoped that the planning committee would play a role from a social, economic, legal and political point of view. As expected by Gandhiji, gender equality was concluded as a fundamental right at the 1931 Karachi session (Dr Chandrapujari, Theories of Development).

After independence in 1950 after the establishment of the Republic, women were given the right to vote in order to give equal status to women in our constitution. Awareness about women's issues and women's empowerment were given great importance in the democratic system. 2001 was declared as the Year of Women Empowerment. The main objective of this Empowerment Year was to empower women socially, economically, politically, mentally and physically. But even though this program has completed 21 years and is

approaching its 22nd year, women's empowerment in India is still seen in writings and big speeches.

The United Nations declared 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment and published the National Policy on Women's Empowerment. In its 2001 report on women's empowerment, the United Nations states that 'enacting legislation to provide equal opportunities and property rights between men and women, allocating and encouraging resources for economic development, and control over resources and political power'. However, even women empowerment is not possible. Yet feminist thinkers have not raised the voice of women's equality as men and women thinkers. Women's empowerment appeared in his writings but was not seen in reality. Nevertheless, he saw the marks of many great people regarding women's empowerment. First of all, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, how right is it to speak against him? They should say it themselves. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's commitment was not seen in other women advocates. I don't understand why women are limited in writing by feminist thought. There were great feminist thinkers, women's equality was not possible even for them.

Recent governments have enacted several laws with the primary objective of empowering women. These legislative measures include the Dowry Prohibition Act, Equal Pay Act, Sati Prohibition Act, Domestic Violence Act, Sexual Violence Act, Widow Remarriage Act, Medical

Termination of Pregnancy Act, Antenatal/Prenatal Diagnostic Act, and the National Commission for Women Act. Each of these laws addresses specific aspects of women's rights and well-being, collectively contributing to the legal framework aimed at promoting gender equality and safeguarding women's interests in various spheres of life.

Even if the government has implemented all these laws, it is not possible. Because until the laws are implemented, the laws are not followed for proper empowerment of women. Laws are working based on caste, religion, power, economic status. The attitude of looking down on women for the purpose of being a woman has increased today. How can this male-dominated society accept that a woman is capable unless the attitude of identifying her as incapable is hidden. Then how can women empowerment be possible? Women's empowerment has been limited only to reading and writing, but today's governments and intellectuals are not working to give time to women's empowerment.

WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

Apart from women's empowerment, if we look at it from the perspective of development, Jawahar Lal Nehru spoke about the development of women and if we want to make the society aware, we must first make the women aware. If a woman moves on the path of progress, the whole family, village and country move

towards progress. expressed the opinion that In the context of development, women's empowerment is a matter of happiness, but it is women It is appropriate to discuss the issues undertaken for development so that women's development is possible.

Women make up two-thirds of the work. But they are registered as one-third workers and paid one-tenth of the total wages paid. How does it develop? Studies by the World Organization have documented that only 1 percent of the world's resources are owned by women. The World Conference on Women was held in 1975 to discuss the status of women in the world. In this conference, the World Organization declared the next decade as the Women's Decade. But there is a need to observe whether women's empowerment and development can be achieved through such a convention. The society which has been looking at women only as a working factory is looking at the development of women in the background of working. Efforts should be made to achieve women's development by giving full independence to women and by providing equal opportunities to women in the society and by creating courage and confidence in poetry written by women. Keeping in view the development of women, efforts are being made to empower women socially, politically, economically and to make them self-reliant by government and non-governmental organizations through Stree

Shakti Sangh/Institution, Stree Shakti Groups. Government women

While governments assert their commitment to women's development through the promotion of gender equality, there is a crucial need for effective monitoring to ensure tangible progress. The Department of Women and Child Development has initiated various schemes, such as the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, Bhagya Lakshmi Yojana, Start of India, and Skill Development Programme, to specifically address women's welfare. Despite the implementation of numerous schemes at both the central and state levels, the desired development in women's status appears elusive. A critical examination reveals a paradox where, on one hand, there are initiatives to elevate women's roles in a transforming society, and on the other hand, there persists a lamentable stance of women enduring misery. Efforts must be intensified to bridge this gap between rhetoric and reality, ensuring that women truly benefit from the envisioned developmental initiatives.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the discourse on women's empowerment and development underscores the complex challenges and contradictions embedded in societal attitudes and structures. Despite contemporary efforts to integrate women into various facets of development, genuine empowerment remains elusive. The tension between the narratives of

progress, often championed by a male-dominated society through the concept of "Women Empowerment," and the persistent portrayal of women in a state of backwardness in women's own writings highlights a fundamental disconnect. True empowerment necessitates not only legal and policy interventions but a profound transformation in the way women are perceived and treated.

The assertion that women's development is contingent on the freedom of women's ideas emphasizes the need for genuine inclusion and recognition of diverse perspectives. As modern governments institute laws and projects aimed at fostering women's development, the essential question arises: can legislation alone bring about the required change? The reality suggests a more profound transformation is necessary, one that challenges ingrained societal norms and biases. Reflecting on the 2001 declaration of the Year of Women Empowerment, it becomes evident that despite the passing of over two decades, the envisioned social, economic, political, mental, and physical empowerment of women remains an aspirational goal in India. This highlights the imperative for a comprehensive reassessment of existing strategies and a commitment to cultural and societal shifts.

As we contemplate the future, achieving women's empowerment and development demands a collective effort to redefine societal perceptions, dismantle barriers to equality, and create an

environment where women are not just included but thrive. The journey toward true empowerment is ongoing, requiring a holistic, nuanced approach that goes beyond rhetoric and actively addresses the roots of gender inequality. Only through sustained commitment and transformative action can the mirage of women's empowerment be transformed into a substantive reality.

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