

The Dimensions of Women's Empowerment

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Abstract : Empowerment of women means developing women as more aware individuals, who are economically productive politically active and independent are able to make intelligent discussion in matter that affect them. Women empowerment is debatable subject. In India at earlier time they were getting equal status with men. But they had faced some difficulties during epic ages from twentieth century their status have been changed slowly. After the 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 position in all walks of the fields. Empowerment is multi-dimensional as it covers financial independence social awareness and political consciousness of and individual. These elements can be categorized as economic empowerment. A women is entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from want and from fear. Empowering women is also an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty.

Keywords: Women empowerment, socio-economic empowerment political empowerment.

Introduction: Women have very unique and special role to play in human race. Even it will not be wrong to say that human society is impossible without the existence of women. Women constitute almost 50% of world's population but India has shown disproportionate sex ratio whereby female's population has comparatively lower than males. As far as their social status is concerned, they are not treated as equal to men in all the places. In the western societies, the women have got equal right and status with men in all walks of life. But gender disabilities and discriminations are found in India as goddess and as other times merely as slave.

Women empowerment has been a focus area since the last two decades in many countries. But the Indian society has always been predominantly male oriented and therefore, the movement of women empowerment is not as strong as other developed countries in the world. Empowerment of women involves many things such as economic opportunity, property right, political representation, social equality, personal right & so on.

Objectives of Research Article:

- To study the definition of women empowerment
- To study the Economic, Social & Educational Empowerment of women.

Methodology Literary Meaning: The study is based on Secondary data. Data collected from various books, journal and websites.

Empowerment: 'Power' is the key word of the term empowerment. According to the International Encyclopedia (1999), Power men's having the capacity and the means to direct one's life towards desired social political and economic goals or status. According to Webster's new world dictionary (1982) the word 'empower' means 'to make or cause power'

Empowerment means taking charge of your life in your work place, with your colleagues, with your subordinates, with your superior with your illness and for your caring for yourself.

Women Empowerment concept : Women empowerment in simple words can be understood as giving power to women to decide for their own lives or inculcating such abilities in them so that they could be able to find their rightful place in the society. (Hasnain, Nadeem 2004)

Women empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which enables women to realize their potential and process which enables women to realize their potential and powers in all spheres of life. The process should materialize only when there is conducive environment for the enlightenment which is to be ensured first. Empowerment is enlightenment and there is no development without enlightenment. It is the quality of life measured not in terms of rising money income or longer life spans alone rather by the autonomy and security enjoyed by women everywhere. Women's empowerment is very essential for the development of society. Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercises choice and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society.

As per the United National Development fund for women the term women's empowerment means:

Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relation and the ways in which relations may be changed.

Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life.

Gaining the ability to organize and influence the direction of social choices exercise bargaining power.

Developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally

Thus, empowerment means a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights. It is a multilevel construct referring to individuals, organizations and community

Dimensions of Women Empowerment: Empowerment is multi-dimensional as it covers financial independence, social awareness and political consciousness of an individual. These elements can be categorized as economic empowerment, social empowerment and political empowerment

Economic Empowerment: All the poverty alleviation programmes were focused on women as they were economically more disadvantaged than men and as their upbringing and mainstreaming are critical for the economic development of a nation. Economic empowerment is nothing but making women aware about their role, importance in economic development and provide them space for attaining financial independence and account their significant contributions to the production process. Economic empowerment is a process as well as a stage which is to be reached by designing strategies focusing on building credit worthiness and financial independence among women by removing all the gender specific barriers which prevent women from gaining access to their rightful share in every life. Rural women have less access to the resources to generate stable incomes. Household income is a poor measure of women welfare because the distribution of income within the household may be quite unequal. Various studies of intra household resource allocation indicate that in many regions, medical care, education and inheritance consequently in the development discourse, most of the poverty alleviating programmes carry an implied agenda of women empowerment which starts with access to credit and involvement in income generation which was accepted as sure strategies for economic empowerment. Thus economic empowerment is a necessary condition for enabling women to seek justice and equality because without economic, women cannot be able to exercise their rights and entitlements. Without reasonable income security, people lack real freedom to make rational choices and to become socially responsible. Without collective and individual voice, the vulnerable will remain that way.

The active involvement /participation of women in vibrant groups like SHGs, NHGs and the like enable them to realize the goal of empowerment. Government of India having realized the power and potential of self-help group approach has started mobilizing the poor women into self-

help groups. The recent studies on development issues proved that the sustainable development can be made possible by making women and equally important paradigm of the development process.

Social Empowerment: Social empowerment means a more equitable social status for women in society because the primary responsibility of any human society is to ensure human dignity to all members. It is often argued that facilitating women's access to money is not an effective means for achieving women's empowerment unless it is linked to their kinds of activities like training on awareness of the impact of women's subordination concept of self-esteem and on the meaning and benefits of empowering women. The approach to gender equity is based on the recognition that all interventions in favour of women must ensure an environment free from all forms of violence against women and also ensure the participation and adequate representation of women at highest policy levels. For today's women, fewer things are in the category of 'not done' compared to the time of independence. One of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education 1986 is to promote empowerment of women through the agency on education and it is considered as a landmark in the approach to women education. The National Literacy Mission is another step towards eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15-35 years by the year 1988. The universalization of elementary education, enrollment and retention of girls in the schools, promotion of Balwadi and crèches, increasing the number of girls' hostel women's polytechnics and multi-purpose institutions, non-formal adult education and open and distance education programmes were some of the other steps taken to boost women's education leading to social empowerment

The vision of the Eleventh Plan (2007-2012) is to ensure that every woman and child in the country is able to develop their potential and share the country's growth and prosperity through a participatory approach which empowers them and makes them partners in their own development when women gain voice in decision making which is to be started with the family, they would be in a position to take decisions for improving the poor socio-economic status. They begin to transform gender relations and so they are to be treated as equal partners in decision making and implementation rather than beneficiaries. However, women's increased participation in the decision making level can only be said to lead to their increased development and empowerment if such participation enables them to achieve greater control over factors of production, access to resources and the distribution of benefits.

Political Empowerment: Political empowerment is a process that enables women to increase their mobility and

break their isolation to develop their self-confidence and self-image and to establish their public presence whereby they participate in decision making in an expanding frame work of awareness and critical analysis to control and influence the direction of development political equality includes not only equal right to franchise but also more importantly, the right to access to the institutionalized centers of power participation of women in panchayati Raj Institutions has been recognized as a step towards equality.

Today one of the issue of concern is the level of women's participation in political life, political participation includes the right to vote, right to contest, right to candidature, their role as women as campaigners, members and their involvement in the decision making process and appointment of women at all level of government. Reserving seats for women in the political institution will provide them an opportunity to raise their grievances and other related personal and social problems in a formal manner. The participation of women in the electoral process is an indicator of their political consciousness as well as their aspiration for status enhancement. The figures concerning women's common participation has been more or less steadily expanding over the year through various elections as voters and as candidates and in terms of participation in campaigning. The number of women getting elected to representative body has been steadily increasing.

Conclusion: The concept of Empowerment is closely related to gender equality and enter into the process of decision making. Empowerment is a process that makes a change over a period of time and requires that the individual being empowered is involved for the benefit of girls and women. It also imbibes the developing confidence in their own capacities to take any decision and to go forward for completion. Women's empowerment is central to human development Empowerment of power could only be achieved if their economic, political and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women and to make them realize that they have the potential to be strong human beings.

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