

# A Study of Different Dimensions of Women Empowerment and Its Importance

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**Abstract** — Before knowing about 'Women Empowerment' we should understand 'Empowerment'. 'Empowerment' means the ability of a person, which gives him the ability to take all the important decisions related to his life and decide what is right and wrong about himself. In women empowerment, we are also talking about the same ability, where women become free from all the shackles of family and society and become the makers of their own decisions. Women empowerment has become a major topic of development and economy in today's era. Because it has been seen since ancient times that women were considered inferior to men in the society and many evils like the practice of Sati dowry death were spread in the society. Women empowerment is the most effective means of development in India. Women all over the world are actively working as a leader and surpassing men in all spheres of life discussion. Women empowerment in India depends on various factors, including geographical location, social status, educational status, etc. However, women continue to face discrimination in most areas such as education, economic opportunities, health and medical assistance, and political participation, indicating that there is still a substantial gap between strategy progress and actual practice at the community level. Formulation and implementation of a solid policy, education regarding women empowerment can accomplish the desired mission in reducing the plight of women in the Indian society.

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Evils, Sati Dowry, Discrimination

## I. INTRODUCTION

The term women empowerment refers to the power given to women to share their inalienable rights. The term refers to the liberation of women from the socio-economic constraints of dependency. Women comprise approximately 50% of the country's population and a large portion of them remain economically dependent without employment. In the era of feminism, a small part of women in India are independent and can exercise their free will and are allowed to create their life as per their wish. But there is a huge divide of women in this country who need optimistic support. In most Indian villages and semi-urban areas, women are still deprived of fundamental education and despite gaining the necessary understanding, they are still not authorized to pursue higher education.

Traditionally being a patriarchal society, women have secondary role to play in every household in India. However, issues related to welfare of women have always been a priority among policy makers since independence, though the path has witnessed repositioning with time and as per the requirement from the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards.

## II. OBJECTIVE

- To develop the ability to understand the importance of women and know their rights.
- To develop the ability to enumerate the elements of empowerment.
- To develop the ability to identify the obstacles coming in the way of women empowerment.
- To develop the ability to know different types of violence against women.

## III. DIMENSIONS

### A. Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment of women means their economic self-reliance and strong capabilities. This is possible only when women contribute to productive work, whether in the primary sector, secondary sector or tertiary sector, and receive their due remuneration along with rights and equality. For economic empowerment of women, they should have equal rights on land, property, bank accounts, savings, investment decisions etc.

1) *Karl Marx has said that:*

"He who has more power to control economic activities will be powerful." And Mexviber talked about 'market value' and dominance based on power and political power. The main reason for the powerlessness of women is their economic subordination. One of the main reasons for women's oppression is women's economic dependence on men. Housewives are not given any separate salary for their work. Her hard work is not valued, so she automatically submits to the man who brings her wages. This economic dependence turns the woman's 'self' into a parasite.

In this context, it is important for women to be economically empowered. The economic strength of women is the basic fact of women empowerment because the economic dependence of women plays a major role in the dominance of men over women. Therefore, there is the greatest need to empower women economically. For this, there is a need to equip them with education and technical skills so that their participation can be ensured and advancement in work along with financial remuneration can be ensured.

2) *Social Empowerment*

The role of family and other social practices has been paramount in determining the secondary status of women. Society plays an important role in the development and preservation of patriarchal values. The story of women's subjugation begins from here. Therefore, social empowerment of women is of utmost importance, so that their dignity is restored in the society.

Every society has its own customs, culture and lifestyle, but one thing is generally common that the status of

women is low in every society. In the name of religion, values and traditions, they have been tied into many bonds which women have also accepted as their destiny. The basic reason behind this is the male-dominated or patriarchal society which has been oppressing women for centuries. He considers women as his property and has been asserting his rights over them. Family is the smallest form of society. This is where discrimination begins and it continues to take a severe form in the social background. Like the difference between son and daughter or rather the difference of gender. Decisions on the birth and death of a daughter, differences in lifestyle, education and There are differences in freedom, division of work, imposition of many restrictions in the name of customs and religion and due to this the independent existence of women has been suppressed.

Therefore, today there is a need to empower women socially on the lines of human rights of equality and freedom to which every individual has the right. This is possible only when in every society woman is considered as man's companion and she is given all the equal rights to which she is entitled. There should be no restrictions on them and they should be treated equally.

### 3) *Political Empowerment*

Politics is an important medium of change in India. Therefore, women's participation in the political process can be successful in creating an environment where basic women's issues can be discussed. Political participation can play a catalytic role. Their political participation will make it easier for issues related to women to get a central place in national policy.

Political empowerment of women means that they get a strong place in the politics of the country. They should get all the rights and power so that they can play an important role in running the politics of the country. Women's issues, decisions, ideas and viewpoints should get proper place in the politics and legal system of the country. Many reservations and legal decisions have to be strictly implemented to create political awareness among women and enable them to participate in the governance system.

### 4) *Religious Empowerment*

Religion has played an important role in the social role of women. Religious rituals and religious morality pushed them to the brink. Therefore, there is a great need for women to understand the reality of the external form of religion and the ostentation of rituals. Challenge it and accept the inner core of religion. It is well known that in every religion, religious rituals and activities are mostly conducted by men. Be it Hinduism, Sikhism, Muslim religion, Christianity, Buddhism or Jainism, most of the followers of religion are men. why so? This is a controversial question.

In such a situation, what are the duties of women towards religion, what should they be and who will decide all this? The need is that it should be in favour of women, for this there is a need to understand the deep secrets of religious texts and take positive decisions because every religion is based on equality and morality.

Thus, women empowerment is a big concept and it can be accepted in its entirety only through a process. The government's awareness in this direction has increased and strong efforts are being made to give it a concrete shape. The government is trying to make the concept of women

empowerment successful especially through education and creating economic opportunities. This is commendable.

## IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Empowerment refers to a situation where the powerless gain greater control over resources and ideologies. It has been associated with terms such as autonomy, power, status and agency. The Indian constitution has very clearly given an equal level playing ground to women and has directed authorities to frame rules and regulations to safe guard the right. However, feminist scholars during 1970s as a way to challenge patriarchy, as a radical approach concerned with transforming power relations in favour of women's rights and gender equality It in 1980s (Batliwala, 1993, 2007) and as an individual process of self-transformation during 1990s (Batliwala, 1993; Kabeer, 1994; Rowlands, 1997; Sen, 1997). They highlight the complex reciprocal relationship between women's self-understanding (Kabeer, 1994) and capacity for self-expression (Sen, 1997), as well as women's access to and control over material resources. The decade of nineties may be considered as an impertinent phase for women empowerment throughout the world as most of the world conferences highlighted towards seizing the opportunities. It accentuated issues of reproductive and sexual rights, violence against women and gender inequality. Even among the eight the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of UN developed in 2000 was targeting to be achieved by 2015, the Goal three was to promote gender equality and empower women. Women empowerment is the defined as the change in the context of a women's life, which enables her increased capacity for leading a fulfilling human life. It gets reflected both in external qualities (health, mobility, education and awareness, status in the family, participation in decision making) and internal qualities (self-awareness and self-confidence)

## V. MATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

India and the entire world is living in the structure of a patriarchal society. It is important to clarify here that when we are talking about women empowerment, it does not mean that the patriarchal society should be transformed into a matriarchal society. The concept of matriarchal society in India is seen in the Khasi and some other tribes of the north-east, where women predominate. If the society has to move in a healthy direction then instead of being matriarchal or patriarchal, if the society is neutral then a better social structure will be created and in true sense men and women will be equally empowered.

Women are known to perform multiple roles effortlessly every day and thus, they are considered the backbone of every society. Living in a male-dominated society, women play a variety of roles, such as caring mothers, loving daughters and capable colleagues. The best thing is that she fits perfectly into every role. Yet they stand as a neglected group of society in different parts of the world. Women have been kept in the chains of slavery for centuries which prevents them from reaching professional and personal heights. Being an NGO for women empowerment in India, Hind rise Foundation has designed our dynamic and change-

oriented programs in such a way that the care of poor young girls will improve the condition of the country.

#### *A. Women's Movement in the World and Its Impact in India*

The foundation of the women's movement in the world was laid in the 19th century itself. During that period, many nations of the West became participants in this movement. Only when the women's movement came into existence, the concept of women empowerment came prominently in front of the world. Therefore, to understand women empowerment, it is important to understand the women's movement. In simple words, the women's movement started with the society considering women inferior. An important principle of feminism is that women have a low status in this patriarchal society.

It is this society that creates the rules and form of living life for him. Denies the independent personality of women. The women's movement does not oppose any man but opposes patriarchal ideas. This movement believes that women should also get equal respect, rights and opportunities as men. The women's movement believes in the concept that women are also human beings, rather than gender inequality. Apart from being a human being, they are also half of the world's population. She has as much contribution in the creation of the universe as a man.

#### *B. Stages of Women's Movement*

The first phase was in the late 19th and early 20th century. It is the beginning. Its first objective was to provide equal opportunities for women in America's urban, liberal and industrial environment.

The beginning of the second wave is considered to be from the sixties. It recognized that both legal and de facto inequalities are inextricably linked and must be addressed.

The third wave starts from the nineties. It arose as a result of the reaction to the second wave. In this the definition of femininity given by the second wave was challenged. Just as feminism was being seen and created at the global level, in the same sequence, extensive efforts were being made for social reform regarding the status of women in India. But its form was not the same as in the West. The Renaissance in India is considered to have begun in the second half of the nineteenth century and lasted till about 1915. This rise was progressing in tandem with social reform and the national movement. In this, issues like voice against superstition, voice against child marriage, Sati system and Devdasi system etc. were raised. People like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jyotiba, Savitribai Phule, Pandita Ramabai did important work towards removing the problems of women according to the then society, creating a favourable environment for them and empowering them.

#### *C. Second Round of Women's Movement*

The second phase of women's movements towards empowering women in India, which begins approximately with Gandhiji's arrival in India, is considered to have started from 1915. This was the period when women actively participated in any call. This is the same period when the Indian Women's Association was established in 1917. At present, the efforts of Gandhi and Ambedkar to bring women

into the mainstream of society are seen admirably. Mahatma Gandhi was talking very practically about purdah system, child marriage, dowry system, problems of widows and abolition of untouchability. On the other hand, Dr. Ambedkar was also doing similar work where he played an important role in providing the right to vote, ending gender discrimination and ensuring the right to equality.

#### *D. Its Third Phase in India*

Its third phase, which can be seen so far, its main points are related to equality in the socio-political-economic life of women. Thus, the feminist movement has played a major role in empowering women in India. At present, there are many aspects of women empowerment in many fields and the challenges faced in it are also no less.

### VI. FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

**Gender Discrimination** – The problem of gender discrimination has affected the pace of women empowerment in India. Gender discrimination refers to the prevailing gender inequality between boys and girls. Due to discrimination between boys and girls on the basis of gender, girls are placed at a lower position than boys in the society in terms of education and upbringing.

#### *A. Types of gender discrimination*

Caste discrimination, racial discrimination, gender discrimination, linguistic discrimination, colour discrimination, cultural discrimination, economic discrimination, spatial discrimination etc. Almost 3/5 of the entire world is made up of girls who are deprived of education. And even school going girls have to leave their studies midway due to various reasons. All this mostly happens due to gender discrimination.

All the above differences are a threat to humanity. All such differences are hindrances in establishing human unity. Yet due to gender discrimination, girls are destroyed in the fatal stage itself. And even after birth, girls have to face gender discrimination throughout their life.

#### *1) Educational Factors*

Education is the most important factor of progress and development. It is the single most important tool of hope for women empowerment and human resource development in India. It highlights access to employment and possibilities of earning livelihood, which revives economic empowerment of women. To join the community of developed countries, people should understand the value and importance of women's education and thus, make joint efforts to put India on a progressive path. Education makes the individual conscientious, enabling them to understand, interpret, criticize and ultimately change their environment. This results in the acquisition of abundant skills that increase the individual's enthusiasm and efficiency in making life better.

Education is the initial line of defines for women who face life-threatening conditions arising from traditional lifestyle. Furthermore, education opens the door to priorities that are not limited by tradition.

#### *B. Suggestions and Recommendation*

To organize action based training programs and growth oriented entrepreneurship development programs in rural

parts of India along with vocational programs to make women self-reliant in connection with implementation of women development programs under various Acts. There is a need to enhance their efficiency and capabilities in taking quick decisions on sex determination of the unborn child through the Self-Employment, Regulation and Prevention of Abuse Act 1994 as well as the PNT Act (Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act) and other related decisions. It is extremely important to prevent and investigate cases related to female feticide and infanticide. In India To full fill the goal of women empowerment, there is a need to implement protections like marriage, inheritance, divorce, adoption, dowry and moral protection or against sexual harassment.

#### *1) Change in women's attitudes*

Women should empower themselves by becoming aware of their oppression, showing initiative and taking advantage of opportunities to bring about change in their situation. Empowerment must come from within the soul. There is a need to empower women themselves by bringing a big change in their outlook.

Women should know that opportunities will not reach their lap. They have to determine ways to capitalize on these. They will have to struggle to regain their dominant position in Indian communities and societies. They should work hard to full fill their rights and maintain justice and equality in the society.

#### *C. Importance of Women Empowerment*

In recent times everyone is paying attention to women empowerment. It is right to say that women empowerment has become the need of the hour. Women should have the freedom, confidence and self-confidence to choose their own needs and demands. Discrimination on the basis of gender is useless and has no significance considering the growth of women in the last few decades. Women are paid less and treated like cooks and servants in families and their true potential is not realised. There is a need for women empowerment in India to overcome such situations and provide them their independent role in the Indian society. Empowering women is a women's right. They should be allowed to pursue higher education and receive equal treatment as men. Women empowerment in India is one of the major conditions for the upliftment of the society and there is no harm in women participating in the development of the society. Women are playing countless roles in the corporate world in fields like medicine, engineering etc. Apart from participating in the field of technology, they are also participating energetically in security services like police, navy, army etc. All these above services are taking the community forward to another level.

#### *D. Capable Of Eliminating Unemployment*

Unemployment is a common problem that can be seen in developing societies. Research has shown that half the population is women. With the help of women empowerment in India, women's unemployment and unequal opportunities in the workplace can be eliminated. Whenever women face unemployment, their real potential remains unutilized. Women should be provided equal opportunities to utilize their power and potential. So that the huge graph of unemployment can be reduced.

#### *E. Important Role in Removing Unemployment*

Peeking into the lifestyle of women and analysing them is unimaginable. You can get an idea of their level of intelligence by the way they tackle problems and find solutions. In the modern era, women are experts in solving technical problems. Women empowerment has an important role in these matters. Without women empowerment in India you will not be able to understand the intelligence of women. Therefore, it is especially important and beneficial for women to be present at work. The study said that almost half of the population is women. With the help of women empowerment in India, women's unemployment and unbalanced opportunities in the workplace can be eliminated. Whenever women face the problem of unemployment, their real potential remains unutilized. Women should be empowered by giving them equal opportunities to utilize their courage and potential. which can provide relief from unemployment

### VII. CONCLUSION

Women Empowerment is not merely a slogan but a prerequisite for an optimal capacity for overall development of a family, society, nation and a sustainable world. The paper has covered about affirmative legislation, plans and programmes initiated by the Government, NGOs and Corporate sector through their Corporate Social Responsibility over a very large spectrum starting from the Indian constitution to development in the recent years. There is urgent need of reassessing India's affirmative actions, giving fresh impetus on empowering girls and women not only through conventional education but also hand holding for skill acquisition and providing them with equitable economic opportunity with providing them with fitting medical and healthcare. The findings open up several avenues for policy discussion and intervention towards women empowerment

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