

Empowerment of Indian Women and Social Change

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Abstract- Except for the law of change, everything around us is subject to change. The new sequence is used in place of the previous one. Life as a whole too is constantly changing. But in the context of society, change does not happen automatically. It should be properly organised, with predetermined shapes, and a strategy that is executed employing precise techniques.

Any issue cannot be simply resolved without the participation of both men and women on an equal footing. Despite the fact that women contribute to society in all spheres and hold a unique position in nearly every neighbourhood and country in the world, they face discrimination and live in a category that is disadvantaged as a result of several limitations and challenges.

India, a country rife with paradoxes, is scarcely an exception. Empowerment is necessary in this situation as well for women, who symbolise Shakti and were formerly afforded a respected status. Increasing women's political, social, and financial empowerment is vital. However, a woman's level of empowerment and equality depends on how responsive society is to issues that impact women. Giving women the opportunity to decide for themselves about their own dependents is referred to as empowering women.

Women must be freed from the restrictions imposed on them by society and their families in order to become more autonomous in all spheres, from their psyches and attitudes regarding their rights and decisions. In all areas of society, gender equality for men and women is the aim. Women must be given more influence if the family, community, and country are to have a successful future. Women's empowerment has become one of the most important topics of the 21st century in the contemporary context.

The well-known country of India is renowned for its extensive cultural heritage, habits culture, spirituality, and ancient geographical aspects. It is also well renowned for being a male chauvinistic society. Women in India receive the best care, nevertheless they are also exploited in the home and by society. They were only permitted to do housekeeping or understand one's responsibilities regarding one's home and family.

Women's rights and personal development were kept absolutely secret. Although they were ignorant of its full importance, Indians adopted the term "Bharat-Mata" to describe this country. Every Indian's mother is referred to as Bharat-Mata, and we must always take care of and preserve her.

Key words: Gender discrimination, social change, gender equality

Introduction:

India needs to exterminate a number of devils in order to empower women, including the system of dowry, literacy rates, sexual assault, disparities, female infanticide, abuse against women, rape, prostitution, illegal trafficking, and other issues. The nation regresses as a result of the socioeconomic, cultural, and educational differences brought on by gender discrimination. The only way to vanquish such evil is to strengthen women and defend their constitutionally guaranteed right to equality in India.

What is meant by empowerment is the capacity to exercise choice, make independent decisions, and reach maximum achievement as an important, active member of society. Concerns about real social influence, political power, and legal rights, along with a psychological feeling of autonomy or influence, are all part of empowerment. It is a complicated word that describes individuals, teams, and society. Empowering of women is crucial for ensuring gender equality.

Women's empowerment, according to the United National Development Fund for Women is:

- Gaining an awareness of gender relations and the potential for change in these connections
- Gaining a sense of value, the conviction that one can bring about desired changes, and the ability to be in charge of one's life.
- Having the power to make decisions increases your negotiating position.
- Gaining the capacity to plan and direct social change in order to establish a more just economic and social system on a national and international level.

Women must participate politically as well. However, there are substantial regional differences in regards to the degree of growth, urbanisation, and academic achievement, especially in a country like India. As a result, the degree and complexity of women's involvement in politics differs from one country to the next and sometimes within a single country.

As they gain greater control over their lives, women are taking charge of their own decisions regarding their lifestyles, vocations, and occupations today. Women have recently demanded equal rights with men in the areas of education, employment, marriage, divorce, and politics in addition to the installation of priests in the religious sector. Further, women must be given equal opportunities in schooling as well as jobs without any type of discrimination.

Giving women the freedom to make choices about their professional and private lives involves granting them equality in all realms, including individual, financial, political, social, and legal ones. Today, because of women's empowerment, men and women work side by side in the workplace. A woman also manages to maintain a healthy balance between her commitment to her

job and her duties to her family and her house. They are juggling their jobs as parents, daughters, sisters, and wives in the home, as well as their professional responsibilities at work with an astounding comfort and harmony.

Review of Literature:

Rekha Pande's *A Journey into Women's Studies: Crossing Interdisciplinary Boundaries* talks about how women's studies have been a potent tool for social and academic development and transformation all over the world, and in recent decades they have contributed to a greater understanding of the multifaceted roles that women play in many civilizations. Feminism is based on the fundamental tenet that women have been excluded from the codified body of knowledge, in which males have created justifications that relate to themselves while having generally declaring women invisible or labeled them as abnormal. In the history of humanity, the formation of women's studies courses in adult and higher education, as well as the profound changes that followed, were greatly influenced by the feminist uprisings of the 1960s and 1970s in the Western world.

Niroj Sinha's *Empowerment of Women Through Political Participation* reflects upon the idea that any country with a majority of women cannot function effectively under a democratic system if it has just half the people. Women make up approximately 50% of the entire population. Democracy will be severely hampered. Additionally, women as a whole have issues, desires, and ambitions that men are unable to communicate effectively. In addition to the country's foreign policy, interactions with other nations, issues of peace and conflict, science and technology, and environmental protection, the pressing issues of the population in any country need to be viewed from the perspective of women because they will specifically affect women.

Patrick Kilby's *NGOs in India: The challenges of women's empowerment and accountability* discusses how the concept of empowerment can be helpful in development. It also analyses the idea of community empowerment, which holds that a group's solidarity can lead to individual empowerment. It focuses on the meaning of empowerment for Indian women as well as how accountability for non-governmental organisations to these women is a crucial component of the emancipation being fulfilled.

Objective of the Study:

The following goals will be kept in mind as the study moves forward:

- Benefits of Empowering Women
- How social changes are associated with women?
- Policies and schemes on women empowerment

Research Methodology:

The methodology adopted here is analytical. Both primary and secondary sources are used. The primary sources are books and e-books, secondary sources are the creative writings and relevant materials collected from various articles, journal, newspaper and book pertinent to the study area.

Benefits of Empowering Women

Women are more confident in their ability to lead fulfilling lives as a result of gender equality. After ceasing to depend on others, they grow into independent individuals. They may lead a dignified and independent life, which would increase their self-confidence and feeling of individuality. They have the capacity to gain fame and significantly improve society's wellbeing. If women are not empowered, we cannot confront discrimination, prejudice based on gender, and inequity. If women are not empowered, they lack the benefit of privacy and security in life. Also it provides a secure working environment for them.

When women live secure, fulfilling lives, raising happier, healthier children, and contributing their skills to the workforce, they may reach their full potential. Additionally, they can promote thriving economies, enhance societies, and advance humankind as a whole.

Without financial and social empowerment, women cannot completely establish their own identities in society, and because they make up a sizeable fraction of the worldwide population, the global financial system would suffer if they are not employed. Women must be included in socioeconomic activities since they are highly educated and imaginative. In order to create an equitable and thriving society, women must be offered equal employment opportunities.

Women make valuable contributions as capable citizens to the attainment and expansion of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), since they are financially independent, have the means of spending on all of their wants and needs, and have a comparable entitlement to the nation's resources.

Social changes associated with women

The phrase "social change" refers to a shift in society as a consequence of multiple group endeavours, changed relationships and class dynamics, and altered attitudes and approaches on the part of the general public along with government officials regarding management, family as well as society as a whole, financial processes, and social views as compared to their prior positions.

We know that most of the families are patriarchal in nature and father is the head of the family. All important decisions are taken by the male member no matter how much effort an woman has put behind. Her role is just bounded to giving birth.

There are several instances that demonstrate how men tend to be more visible and recognised in society than women. When viewed from a male perspective, a woman's employment is not deemed to be work if she is not paid despite doing the majority of the home duties. Although a woman spent the majority of her time and effort performing these tasks, it will not be regarded as employment as no compensation is involved.

Law has substantially changed how society views women, but since everything has a flip side, there are still some situations that call for adjustments. Law does not always contribute to social change; on occasion, society should take the initiative. Every woman desires to be as powerful and respected in society as males. A safe atmosphere is absolutely necessary for all of this.

Additionally, it is evident that nearly all women today are gaining freedom, equality, and respect in society, which undermines societal conventions and conventional standing.

Policies and schemes on women empowerment

Following independence, the government established a number of bodies and laws to advance women's rights. Some of the policies are:

The *National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001*, aims for the improvement and welfare of Indian women. It also aims at fostering an atmosphere in which women can reach their greatest potential and to give women the same participation and opportunity as males, as well as the ability to make decisions. It also focus on providing equitable access to health care, high quality training, equal pay and all other necessary guidelines.

In 1992, the *National Commission for Women* was established. It was put into place to safeguard women's legal rights. The commission's primary goals were:

- to monitor the legal safeguards that are offered to women.
- to suggest legal action.
- to resolve women's complaints and problems.
- to assist the government in putting various women's policies into effect.

The *Ujjwala Scheme* intends to outlaw the smuggling of women and children as human beings.

- preventing the trafficking of women and children for sexual purposes.
- taking care of and rescuing sufferers.
- providing facilities like nutrition, housing, clothing, healthcare, and rehabilitation programmes.

The *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* Scheme, which came into effect in 2015, has distinguished itself as one of the crucial laws for women's empowerment. The goal of this movement is to outlaw female foeticide. Other goals of this programme include eliminating gender-biased sex, raising awareness among the poorer segments of society, and educating and protecting young girl

Conclusion

One of the most pressing issues of the 21st century, both nationally and internationally, is the empowerment of women. Women's empowerment advances the cause of inclusive participation and makes society and the globe a better place to live. Increased happiness for the family and businesses whereby women make an impact is what it means.

In every field, women have excelled beyond males. There are still gaps in the context of women's empowerment, despite the fact that they have been deprived of equity since the dawn of time and have been treated differently for so long. Women still experience injustice and bias against them in many areas of the nation. Numerous programmes and policies that are put in place for the benefit of women frequently fail to reach them. As a result, there are some major issues that must be addressed quickly. Governmental measures by themselves would not be adequate to accomplish this. In order to eliminate gender discrimination and give women equal opportunity to participate in the political, economical, and social affairs of the nation, society must take the initiative to make these changes.

However, at the present time, a woman can fulfil her desires of becoming whatever she wants. We can clearly see how time has changed since the ancient days. Nowadays, women have outgrown men in all respects.

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