



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

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The role of women in development is most intimately related to achieve the goal of economic empowerment and it is a strategic question of the development of all societies. Women constitute approximately half of population and still are most deprived, ignored and exploited. Many studies reveal that women have a multidimensional role in the improvement of child care, nutrition, health and overall development of a Society. Since the main purpose of this paper is to find out aspects and facts of economic empowerment of women.

Keywords: Economic empowerment, Multidimensional.

INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that women enjoyed a higher status in ancient India compared to contemporary Greek and Roman civilization. It was a position superior to men. There are literary evidences to suggest that women power destroyed kingdoms and mighty ruler. Women were allowed to have many husbands. In Vedic society, women participated in religious ceremonies and tribal assemblies. Monogamy was common. Polygamy was not. With the passage of time, the status of women started deteriorating. But the advent of British education system and efforts of social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, it started improving. Since majority of men were against women liberation. India has the largest population of non school going working girls. India's constitution guarantees free primary education for both boys and girls up to the age of 14. Numerous steps have been taken to provide institutional framework for activities for economic empowerment of women.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- 1 To examine economic independence of women.
- 2 To know about the impact of different women development programs run by public and private agencies for improving the condition of women.
- 3 To know about earnings of women.

Collection of Data

The study is based upon the secondary data and it has been collected from various sources i.e. newspapers, websites, various bulletins etc.



Hypothesis

The present study is designated to test the following hypothesis: Economic Empowerment of women depends upon the economic, social and political participation.

Indian women have suffered a dualism in her status on her way to play effectively her economic, social and political role in the development. Women constitutes approximately half of the population and still are among the most deprived, ignored and exploited section of the society. The rising incidents of crime and violence against women are indicators of a decline in the value of women in the society. Increasing physical violence against women in the form of murders, rape, tortures for not bringing dowry, wife beating and female feticide are all indicators of the powerless position of women in the family and society. The sex ratio in India has been declining since 1901. In India, numerous steps have been taken to provide constitutional safeguards and institutional frame work for activities for women welfare. The preamble of directive principle of state policy embodies the major policy goals of welfare state in which right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women equally pay for equal work, maternity relief for some of the women specific directive principles. Sixth plan introduced a separate section on women's empowerment situation and outlook. In the eighth plan, there was a shift from development to empowerment of women. In the ninth plan, the maximum attention was given to child labor and specially women labor.

Education, Skill acquirement and training play an important role in the empowerment of women. In the case of large majority of women, the prevalent bias and discrimination in all sectors and the constraints in the access to resources, knowledge and power have resulted in pushing women to the lower end to the job market. According to an estimate by the national commission on self employed women, 94% of the total female workforce is concentrated in the vast rural and urban unorganized sector. In response of women's movement research and other national and international factors, state policies in India as in other developing countries have incorporated women's concerns. There is a proliferation of policies, programs, projects and legislations designed to improve the conditions of women since late seventies. These actions signified a formal recognition of women issues on the part of the state. But the simple recognition is not enough. It is more important as to what extent the public laws and policies actually helped to develop a social context which could facilitate the realization of democratic and empowerment objectives. In India women have suffered a long period of patriarchal practices as female infanticide, child marriage, seclusion, dowry, levirate and bigamy.

The specific purpose of the present paper has been to know about the economic empowerment of women, their position in the family and society. Empowerment means the process of change that gives individual greater freedom of choice and action. Women's



economic empowerment is one of the most important factors contributing to equality between men and women. India ranks 127 out of 187 countries in the gender inequality index with a score of 0.536. Economic status improved when the women get employed.

Four key areas of works in which women engaged

- 1 Informal economy-95%
- 2 Women owned enterprises-10-14%
- 3 Formal economy- 15%
- 4 Agriculture- 40%

Major issues in women economic empowerment in India

- 1 Economic backwardness.
- 2 Illiteracy.
- 3 Lack of confidence.
- 4 Implementation gaps.
- 5 Lack of political will.
- 6 Lack of knowledge.
- 7 Women as unpaid workers in subsistence agriculture.
- 8 low level of technology and primitive farming practices.
- 9 Poor access to credit and marketing networks.
- 10 Social and cultural barriers as executive responsibility for household work, restriction on mobility etc.
- 11 Adverse social norms.
- 12 low health status.
- 13 Burden of unpaid care work.
- 14 less control on their earnings.
- 15 Lack of infrastructural facilities.

Primary drivers of change for women's economic empowerment

- 1 Tackling adverse norms and promoting positive role models
- 2 Strengthening visibility, collective voice and representation.
- 3 Promoting realistic participation in decision making bodies.
- 4 Changing business ,culture and practice.
- 5 Generate self confidence, self sufficiency and self dependent.
- 6 Ensuring legal protection and reforming discriminatory laws and regulations.
- 7 Including skills for institution building and asset management.
- 8 Improving public sector practices in empowerment and procurement-ensuring a genderless.



9 Building assets-digital, financial and property.

10 Awareness regarding women's rights and their legal protection.

Various studies examined and also discussed that though education, occupational opportunities and providing women with new role outside the home, their social position in the family remains largely unchanged because the system of arranged marriage reasserts the authority of caste norms and the obligation of conformity to the traditional image of women as wife, mother with low ritual status. The emphasis on education was equipping women to carry out their multiple role as citizens, house wives, mother, contributes to the family income and the builders of new society. Various studies also revealed that the problem of illiteracy in India is embedded more among females than among males and problem here to compounded by a variety of cultural, economical, sociological and even anthropological factors to keep women in economic subjection as long as possible.

CONCLUSION

Education, skill acquirement and training play an important role in the employment market and also an important aspect. Over the years women have started into create spaces for themselves. More and more women in the contemporary world are seeking wage employment outside the domestic area. While entry into productive activities is now open to females in most societies, their actual access to such work is still obstructed by the physical separation of home and work place. Society tends to take for granted not only women's role as mother but also their roles as wives and homemaker as though these were the roles assigned by the nature. Self help groups are also a widely popular method of organizing and economically empowering them. There must be better coordination to cover all the benefits of all programs concerning women operated by various state Govts, Depts., different ministries for empowering women so as to get maximum benefit.

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