

DR. B. R Ambedkars Role in Women Empowerment

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Abstract

Dr. B.R Ambedkar strongly believed that women empowerment can be achieved by welfare of women. The activities of empowering women worldwide should follow the vision of Dr. B.R Ambedkar. He spent his entire life for the betterment of women, he fought against unjust and inhumane practices like child marriage, devdasi system and advocated family planning. Today's women are trapped in the circle of insecurity, male domination, lack of awareness about her rights and no decision making powers. He had a humanitarianism view and frequently raised his voice against all sort of injustice towards women prevalent in india

I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved - **DR .B.R Ambedkar**

Key words: women's rights, constitutional provisions for women's, Steps Taken By The Government Of India For Women's Empowerment.

Introduction

Women's empowerment is a process in which women gain greater share of control over resources material, human and intellectual like knowledge, information, ideas and financial resources like money - and access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society end nation, and to gain 'power'. According to the Country Report of Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one; of power". But, from time immemorial, the women in this land of ours were treated as a sort of thing. Her placing in the society was not at par with other human beings. She has no rights. She cannot move nor do anything at her will.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar The Champion Of Women's Rights

Dr. Ambedkar championed the cause of women as well as the miserable plight of Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes throughout his career. He discussed a number of problems of Indian women and sought for their solutions in Bombay Legislative Council, in the Viceroy's Assembly as the chairman of the Drafting Committee and also in the Parliament as the first Law Minister of Independent India.

Dr. Ambedkar was sworn in as a nominated members of the Bombay Legislative Council on 18th Feb., 1927. He advised Indians to participate in the world war on behalf of the British Government. His arguments on the Maternity Benefit Bill and on Birth Critical were quite relevant to recognize the

dignity of women. He vehemently supported the Maternity Bill.

His argument was –

“It is in the interest of the nation that the mother ought to get a certain amount of rest during the pre-natal period and also subsequently, and the principle of the Bill is based entirely on that principle”. At the All India Depressed Classes Women’s Conference held at Nagpur on 20th July, 1940 Dr. Ambedkar emphasized that there could not be any progress without women. He spoke “I am a great believer in women’s organization I know that what they can do to improve the condition of the society if they are convinced. They should educate their children and instill high ambition in them.

Constitutional

Provisions

The Constitution of India contains various provisions, which provide for equal rights and opportunities for both men and women. The salient features are:-

- Article 14 guarantees that the State shall not deny equality before the law and equal protection of the laws;
 - Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the ground of sex;
 - Article 15 (3) empowers the State to make positive discrimination in favour of women and children;
 - Article 16 provides for Equality of Opportunity in matters of public employment;
 - Article 23 prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labour;
 - Article 39 (a) and (d) enjoins the State to provide equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work;
 - Article 42 enjoins upon the State to make provisions for securing just and humane conditions of work, and for maternity relief;
 - Article 51A(e) imposes a Fundamental Duty on every citizen to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
 - Article 243D (3) provides that not less than 1/3rd of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women, and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat;
 - Article 243T(3) provides that not less than 1/3rd of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality shall be reserved for women and such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality;
 - Article 243T(4) provides reservation of offices of Chairperson in Municipalities for Sc, ST, Women in such manner as the legislature of a State, may by law provide;
- In pursuance of the above Constitutional provisions, various legislative enactments have been framed to protect, safeguard and promote the interests of women. Many of these legislative enactments have been in the sphere of labour laws to ameliorate the working conditions of women labour.

Steps Taken By The Government Of India For Women’s Empowerment

It is the education which is the right weapon to cut the social slavery and it is the education which will enlighten the downtrodden masses to come up and gain social status, economic betterment and political freedom – Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Education of Women:

Education to women is the most powerful instrument of changing their position in the society. Education also brings about reduction in inequalities and also acts as a means to improve their status within the family. In order to encourage education of women at all levels and to dilute gender bias in the provision and acquaintance of education, schools, colleges and even universities were established exclusively for women in the country. To bring more girl children, especially from marginalised BPL families, into the mainstream of education, Government has been providing a package of concessions in the form of free supply of books, uniform, boarding and lodging, clothing for hostilities, mid-day meals, scholarships, free by-cycles and so on

Self Help Groups:

Self Help Groups are small homogenous groups consisting of 12-20 women from BPL families voluntarily organised to promote savings. They are self-managed groups of poor women which primarily came into existence to mobilise financial resources through their own savings and lend the same amongst themselves to meet the credit needs of their members.

Capacity Building and Skill formation:

In order to improve the entrepreneurial ability and skill of the women, Government has been imparting various types of training designed to promote self and wage employment

Skill Up-gradation Training Programme

Provision of skill training to women in SHG has been given recognition so as to enable them to start their own income-generating activities. The duration of the training and the cost depends on the nature of the trade selected by the members.

Women & Child Development

Women's empowerment is an important agenda in the development efforts. There has been significant shift in approach of the district administration towards the development of women, especially the poor & the illiterate.

Working Women's Hostel:

To provide secured accommodation to the working women, Working Women's Hostel has been established at Angul & functioning since 1996. State Old Age Pension (SOAP) / National Old Age Pension (NOAP).

Employment And Work Participation Rate

The work participation rate indicates to a great extent the economic empowerment of women in the society. The status of women is intimately connected with their economic position, which in turn depends on opportunities for participation in economic activities. Education along with participation of women in workforce has been universally recognised as an important element in the adoption of small family norms, which is essential for family planning. There has been a considerable improvement in the entry of women in all sectors of employment in the country.

Women And Political Participation

Political equality to all children regardless of birth, sex, colour, etc is one of the basic premises of democracy. Political equality includes not only equal right to franchise but also more importantly, the right to access to the institutionalised centres of power. Thus, political participation of women means not only using the right to vote but also power sharing, co-decision making and co-policy making at all levels. The active participation of women in political sphere is integral to empowerment of women and helps to build a gender-equal society as well as to speed up the process of national development.

National Commission For Women

In January 1992, the National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament with the specific mandate to study and monitor all matters relating to the constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women. The Commission extend financial support to NGOs and educational institutions to conduct legal awareness programme to enable women to become aware of their rights.

Conclusion

Education of both men and women will lead to change in attitudes and perceptions. It is not easy to eradicate deep-seated cultural value, or alter tradition that perpetuate discrimination. Law can only be an instrument of change, that must be effectively used. The status of women cannot be raised without opening up opportunities of independent income and employment. Empowerment of women so as to enable them to become equal partners with their male counterparts so that they have mutual respect for each other and share the responsibilities of the home and finances should be the ultimate goal that we must aspire to achieve. Enforcement of basic human rights of gender equality must take place, without undermining the institution and sanctity of marriage, and family.

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