

Women Empowerment and Its Current Scenario in India

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Abstract

Women empowerment refers to provide the women economical, Social and educational rights without any kind of discrimination based on gender, class, religion or social status. It is an essential prerequisite for the development and progress of a nation. We can say Women empowerment is about giving equal chances in life. It means women can be helpful in good education, job and in taking important decisions in their own way. When they are empowered they can easily reach in their goals and make this world better and wonderful. It's our duty to give opportunities to every women. We should support women for their rights and opportunities. In this way we can give a valuable award to the society. It's very important to take measures to lift the social, personal and professional status of women, bringing them shoulder to shoulder with men.

Keywords: Empowerment, Women rights, Government role, Economic opportunities.

1. Introduction

Women empowerment can be dependent to promote women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choice and their right to influence social change for themselves and others. We see women are ahead of men in many socio-economic activities. It leads to decrease in domestic violence. According to Sir Herbert Risley-the women of Vedic period in India had enjoyed more freedom than the European women of even today. Our great legend Swami Vivekananda said, "It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing". So in today's world, it is not just a phrase. It is a key element for the progress, dignity and harmony of society. Amartya Sen said, "Empowering women is key to build a Future We want".

Components and system

There are several materials that contribute to women's empowerment in India, including laws, government motivates and schemes as well as education and self-help group.

A. Laws

1. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976. : Ensures equal pay for men and Women.
2. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961: Prohibits the practice of paying or accepting dowry.
3. The special marriage Act, 1954: Allows people to marry regardless of their faith or religion.
4. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971: Prohibits illegal abortions.

5. The Sexual Harassment of women of Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressed) Act, 2013: Protects women in the workplace.

B. Government initiatives

1. Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana: Provides affordable credit for women interpret entrepreneurs and self- help groups.
2. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Focuses on education to improve women's welfare.
3. Mahila E- Haat: An online marketing platform for women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.
4. Mahila Shakti Kendra: Faciliates skill development and entrepreneurship Programs for women at the village level.
5. Pradhan Mantri Matri vandana Yojana: Provides financial to Pregnant and lactating women.
- C. Education: Education is a key way for women to achieve equal socio-economic status.
- D. Economic empowerment: Women should have equal access to work opportunities and be able to participate in all types of markets.
- E. Political empowerment: Women should have the skills and confidence to be equal to men in society.
- F. Mentoring: Mentoring can help women and girls develop self-esteem. Overcome domestic violence and navigate the workplace.
- G. Supporting women-run business: Women's economic empowerment can help business perform better and support economic empowerment.
- H. Leadership training: Leadership rising can help women increase in the public sphere.
- Endorsing the Women's Empowerment Principles: These principles include treating women and men fairly at work promoting education and professional development for women and implementing Practices that empower women.
- J. Improving safety: Improving safety and gender based violence in a common thread across women's empowerment.

There are several benefits of women empowerment including that of society and as well as on the country. Some of the benefits of women empowerment are listed here:

1. Women are able to live their life with dignity and self-respect.
2. The self-confidence of women is increased and they make progress contributing to the growth of the nation.
3. The social status of women is increased and they are better recognized and appreciated.
4. They are able to make financial decisions on their own and become financially independent.
5. Women empowerment paves the way for an equal society where no gender discrimination exists.
6. Women empowerment brings better health facilities for the woman winch in turns improve overall health status of the country.
7. Earning women adds to the family's income and hence elevates its living standard a social Status.
8. A well-educated woman ensures that her children are educated as well, making to a prosperous nation.
9. Women empowerment will help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030) as envisioned by the United Nations.

Women's empowerment has five components:

1. Women's sense of self-worth.
2. Their right to have and to determine choices.
3. Their right to have access to opportunities and resources.

4. Their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home.
5. Their ability to influence the direction of society.

Results and Discursion

Due to empowerment of women it appeared in the society a large scale development. Women Empowerment improved economic outcomes like increased income and reduced, poverty, better health and education for families, greater political participation, education an equitable society as empowered. These are the key areas where women's empowerment leads to positive results for society

1. Economic empowerment: Increased access to employment higher income levels, ability to control finances, leading to improve family wellbeing and reduced Poverty.
2. Educational attainment: Higher literacy rates among women leading to better educational opportunities for families.
3. Political Participation: Greater representation of women in leadership roles, influencing policy decisions that benefit communities.
4. Social change: Reduced gender based violence, improved gender equality norms and greater social stability.

Women's empowerment is a topic that can be discussed in a variety of ways. Women's empowerment is the process of giving women the tools to make life changing status in a society on an equal footing with men. Like as Access to opportunities and resources; The right to make choices and their own lives; The ability to influence social Change; The ability to redefine gender roles; women should have a strong sense of self-worth; Women should be able to make their own Choices; Some ways to empower women include; Education; Training; Awareness raising; Building self-confidence; Expending choices. Actions to transform institutions reinforce gender discrimination and inequality. In India women's empowerment efforts include:

1. Promoting education, health care and economic independence
2. Laws addressing gender- based violence, workplace discrimination and inequality.
3. Initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, self- half groups and reservation policies.
4. One stop center: This scheme provides a range of services to women affected by violence, including medical and Police assistance and legal aid.
5. Women helpline: This 24/7 helpline supports women in distress.
6. Rastriya Mahila kosh: This scheme provides micro-credit to women for in come generating activities.
7. Ujjawala: This scheme prevents trafficking and provides rescue, rehabilitation and repatriation of victims.
8. Working women Hostels: This scheme provides safe accommodation for women who work away from their homes.
9. Biotechnology Career Advancement and Re-orientation Programme.
10. Bio-CARE: This programme is for women scientists and is funded by the Department of Biotechnology.
11. Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in Women (CURIE): This programme is funded by the department of Science and Technology.
12. Indo - U.S. Fellowship for women in STEMM: This Programme is funded by the Department of science and Technology.

13. Mobility scheme: This programme is funded by the Department of science and Technology.
14. POSHAN Abhiyaan: This programme aims comes to address malnutrition issues across the Country. Equally our state west Bengal also adapted so many programmes to women's empowerment and development.

Our present chief minister of West Bengal lunched many schemes in our state for women's empowerment.

1. Krishak Bandhu: In January 2019 the department of Agriculture Govt. of West Bengal introduced the Krishak Bandhu scheme with an aim to provide financial assistance to all Farmers of West Bengal for agricultural purposes and to the farm families in the event of untimely death of the farmers. Recently the scheme has been recast and renamed as "Krishak Bandhu". The new scheme was launched by the honorable chief minister of west Bengal on 17th June 2021. For this scheme not only the male members of the family are happy but the female members are also because they can get promote to make grow their children by earning more money.
2. West Bengal Student credit card: Our chief minister thought about the students where boy and girl are equally maintained. Our chief minister is a lady and she has great thinking about the students. Under the visionary leadership of Mamata Banarjee the Higher Education Department, govt. of West Bengal has introduced student Credit Card Scheme for the Student, of West Bengal to enable the education without having any financial Constraints. This scheme is designed to support the students to pursue secondary ,higher Secondary, madrasa, undergraduate and post graduate studies including professional degree and other equivalent courses in any school, Madrasa, college, University and other affiliated institute within and outside India.
3. "Karmasathi Prakaalpa" a new scheme is being introduced for.
4. Lakshmir Bhandar: " Lakshmir Bhandar" is à flagship scheme launched by the West Bengal government. It aimed at providing direct cash assistance to women from economically weaker sections, primarily focusing on empowering them financially and enhancing their decision making power within the house hold by giving them access to a regular monetary amount. This scheme is considered a significant step towards women empowerment in the state Particularly for those between the ages of 25 and 60 years old. Women of general caste set 1000 rupees and schedule caste set 1200 rupees per month.

The key aspects of Lakshmir Bhandar are direct cash transfer; the core feature of the scheme is the monthly transfer of a specific amount directly into the beneficiary's bank account, allowing them to utilize the money for essential needs and personal expenses. The eligibility of the scheme is primarily targeted towards female heads of households from economically weaker sections with specific eligibility criteria based on age, income and residence within West Bengal. One of the major points is Differential Amount, Depending on the social category beneficiaries receive varying amount; typically, women belonging to scheduled castes and Schedule Tribes receive a higher monthly payout of compared to general Category beneficiaries.

Impact of Lakshmir Bhandar has a deep impact on women Empowerment, by providing women with their own disposal income, Lakshmir Bhandar is seen to promote financial independence, enabling them to participate more actively in house hold contribute, more to family welfare.

It has a main potential benefits of Lakshmir Bhandar are

- Economic Empowerment: Direct cash transfer to the householder and access to basic necessities, enhancing overall living Standards.

- Social Impact: By empowering women financially; the scheme can potentially lead to increase educational opportunities for girl; improved health outcomes and greater participation, in community activities.
- Gender Inequality: Providing women with financial autonomy Can Contribute to a more equitable distribution of Power within households.

The primary objective of the Lakshmir Bhandar scheme is to provide the female heads of a family with a specific amount of funds to ensure they are financially independent. Considering the average monthly expenditure of a house-hold in west Bengal the initiative has set an amount that would be provided to the families.

5. “Kanyashree Prakalpa”:

This scheme aims to improve the wellbeing of girls by encouraging education and delaying marriage until they are at least 18 years old, the legal age of marriage. The scheme provides financial assistance to families with girl children through two conditional cash benefits. K1: An annual scholarship of rupees 1.000 for girls ago 13-18 who remain in education and are unmarried and K2: A onetime grant of rupees 25,000 for girls who turn 18 are unmarried and are pursuing an academic or occupation.

Schools register students' names for the scheme in grades 7 and 8. The scheme is for families with a yearly income of less than Rs. 12000. The scheme was founded by Chief Minister of west Bengal Mamata Banerjee on March 8, 2013. The scheme has received awards and acceptance for its contribution to the socio-economic development of West Bengal. The United Nations honored the scheme in a competition of 552 projects from 63 Countries.

Kanyashree is initiative undertaken by the govt. of west Bengal to improve the lives and status of the girls by helping low-income families do not force their daughters into arranged child marriage because of economic difficulties.

6. “Rupashree Prakalpa”

Rupashree Prakalpa is a scheme by the Government of West Bengal that provides a one-time financial grant of Rs. 25,000 to families of daughters who are getting married. The scheme aims to help families who are Struggling financially and often have to borrow money at high interest rates to pay for their daughter's wedding.

The applicant must meet the following criteria: Be at least 18 years old; Be unmarried at the time of application; The proposed marriage must be her first; Be resident of west Bengal or have lived there for the past five years; Her family's annual income must be less than 1.50 lakh; Her prospective groom must be at least 21 years old; She must have an active bank account in her name. Application can be submitted online at www.wbrupashree.gov.in. In rural areas, applications can be admitted to the BDO office and in municipality areas, thy can be submitted to the S.D.O. office.

Conclusion:

Women's empowerment is vital for achieving gender equality, fostering societal progress and unlocking the full potential of women in all spheres of life; it requires addressing structural inequalities, providing equal access to education, health care, economic policies that challenge gender norms, ultimately leading to a more equitable and prosperous Society for all. In this respect it is need to remember and focused on few points, mainly

Economic benefits: Empowering women contributes to economic growth by increasing their participation in the Workforce and entrepreneurship

Social impact: Women empowerment leads to improve health outcomes better education levels for children and Stronger Communities.

Political Participation: Increased female representation in politics is crucial for decision making that addresses woman's needs.

Multi-faceted approach: Achieving women's empowerment requires a comprehensive strategy including legal reforms, awareness campaigns and access to quality education and health care.

There are so many examples where women's empowerment is acknowledged by the different countries in the world

1. Government initiatives: The Indian government has prioritizes women's empowerment and implemented policies to improve their education and Participation in the workforce.
2. Global Platforms: The United Nations and G20 acknowledge
3. Women's empowerment and education as a priority, The UN has initiatives like the "He or she" campaign and the spotlight initiative.
4. Business: Some businesses are committed to empowering women and fostering an environment where everyone can thrive.
5. Recognition of women contributions: Some acknowledge the strength, talent and resilience of women who have helped get us where we are today.
6. Women's empowerment is important because it can contribute to the health and Social development of families, Communities and countries when women are empowered.
7. Economic empowerment: Women's economic empowerment is when women can participate in and benefit from decent work, social protection and markets. Economic empowerment can improve women's well-being and Women's ability to manage risks.
8. Education: Education is a milestone in women's empowerment because it helps women Challenge, social norms. It can also help to women improve their status in society, family and the Politico-economic system.
9. Violence against women: violence against women (VAW) is a violation of women's 'human rights that affects their health and potential .Feminists working in development believe that in VAW must be eliminated first and foremost.
10. Women's political empowerment: Studies suggest that the Political empowerment of women is associated with increased levels of economic development in the long run.

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