



CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND EDUCATION IN INDIA- A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr. RAJESHWARI. A

Assistant Professor

Department of Sociology

Maharani's Women's Arts, Commerce
and Management College, Bengaluru-560001

Abstract:

Concerns and Problems of Women Empowerment and Education in India- A Sociological Perspective”, in this ERA of 21st century, Women empowerment has become one of the most important concerns. But it is still an illusion of reality. Women Empowerment is essentially the process of overall upliftment as economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. The study is based on secondary data that was taken from different government gazettes, surveys and reports. The study reveals that women are relatively disempowered and they enjoy lower status in spite of many efforts undertaken by Government. The unequal gender norms by women are still prevailing in the society. The study consists by an observation that access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to Women Empowerment. Women education in India is necessary, as education is a foundation stone for the empowerment of woman. Education also brings a reduction in inequalities and functions in improvement of status within the family and develops the concept of participation.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Education, Socio-Economical Status

Introduction

Empowerment of women is essentially related to the upliftment process of economic, social and political status of women, the habitually neglected ones in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violent behavior. Women empowerment involves the construction of a society, a political environment, where in women can breathe without the fear of domination, exploitation, hesitation, discrimination and the general feeling of harassment which goes with being a woman in a traditionally male dominated structure. The world's population comprise of 50 per cent women whereas India has shown disproportionate sex ratio is lower as compared to males. The women are not treated equally as compared to men in all places as far as the social status is concerned. Even today the problems such as gender discriminations are faced. Empowerment can be studied as means of creating a social environment in which one can make decisions and make choice as an individual for social transformation. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstances of one's lives. There are various elements in the society which are deprived of their basic rights in all societies, but these elements lack in the awareness of their rights. If we enlist such elements from the society, then women would top this list. In fact, women are the most important factor of every society. As a consequence of this growing tendency of underestimating women such as to make them occupy a secondary position in society and to withdraw their basic rights, the need for empowering women was felt. Today we enjoy the benefits of being citizens of a free nation, but we really need to think whether each of the citizens of our country is really free or enjoying freedom, in the true sense of the term. The discrimination between men

and women and discrimination against women are age-old issues all over the world. Thus women pursue for equality with man is a universal fact. Women should be treated equally with men in all matters of education, employment, inheritance, marriage, and politics etc. The Constitution of our nation doesn't carry any degree of inequality between men and women, but our society has deprived women of certain basic rights, which were bestowed upon them by our Constitution. Empowerment allows individuals to acquire their full potential, to improve their political and social participation, and to believe in their own capabilities.

"Women's empowerment is defined as the process in which their spiritual, political, social or economic status is raised".

Empowerment carries the following aspects with it –

1. Ability to take their own decisions by own,
2. To gain information and have other facilities at their disposal which would empower them to take proper decisions,
3. Firmness while going through collective decisions,
4. Developing a positive way of thinking regarding the ability to bring about the reconstruction,
5. Empowering them to bring about improvement in one's own capabilities,
6. Proficiency to upgrade other's attitudes in a democratic manner,
7. To involve one in continuous and self-propagated development process and to gain active participation in the process of reconstruction,
8. One should get over negative factors and ought to build up a positive image of an individual.

Significance of Education

According to M. Phule "Education is that which demonstrates the difference between what is good and what is evil". As if we consider the above definition than we come to know about that whatever the revolutions that have taken place in our history, Education is at the base of them.

Value of Education in Women's Empowerment

It is considered that the Women's empowerment is not bounded only for the Indian society. In this regard if we consider the global aspect, we will come to know that the women are being treated equally in all the developed nations. Therefore, literacy should spread amongst them. The literacy rate amongst the women in the post Independent Era is not up to the expectations. As a developing nation, we dream of becoming a Super Power by 2020. For becoming a Super Power, each element of our society/ nation should contribute in the nation building process.

According to the provisions of United Nation Development Fund for Women the term women's empowerment means:

1. The ways in which these relations may be changed are, by acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations.
2. A belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life a developing sense of self-worth.
3. The abilities to generate choices to exercise bargaining power are gained.

4. Upgrading the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change, with objective of creating a more social and economic order, nationally as well as internationally.

As empowerment is concerned with actual social influence, political power, legal rights and empowerment states a psychological sense of personal control or influence. It is a multi-level construct referring to individuals, organizations and communities. It is an international, ongoing process centered in the local communities, involving mutual respect, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources helps to gain greater access to the control over these resources.

To study literacy rate between men and women we are required to go through this data given below by going through the above table, now we are aware of that at no point the literacy rate of women could match that of men. As a result, even after 65 years of independence, women are succeeded to gain a secondary position in our social hierarchy. Therefore, the women's empowerment cannot be effected unless we persuade the importance of women's education.

Table-1 Literacy rate in India:

YEAR	PERSON	MALE	FEMALE
1901	5.3	9.8	0.7
1911	5.9	10.6	1.1
1921	7.2	12.2	1.8
1931	9.5	15.6	2.9
1941	16.1	24.9	7.3
1951	16.7	24.9	7.3
1961	16.7	24.9	7.3
1971	29.5	39.	18.7
1981	36.2	46.9	24.8
1991	52.1	63.9	39.2
2001	62.3	76	54
2011	74.4	82.14	65.45
2021*	77.70	84.70	70.30

*AS PER NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE (NSO) 2021 DATA

Review of Literature

This area of research entitled as “The Sociological Study on Concerns and Problems of Women Empowerment and Education in India”. There are number of researchers done by various researchers like H. Subrahmanyam (2011), Duflo E. (2011), and R. Kanbur (2002). All these are helpful to give a new way of scope in the concerning area of research. Duflo E. (2011) Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research and the study shows that Empowerment and Development are pathetic to self-sustaining and that commitment to equality for its own sake may be needed to bring about equality between men and women. H. Subrahmanyam (2011) compares women education in India at present and Past. Author highlighted that there has a good progress in overall enrolment of girl students in schools. The terms empower means to give lawful power or authority to act. It is the process of acquiring some activities of women. R. Kanbur (2022) The research was trying to tell to the world that there is disconnection or no relationship between gender inequality, education and empowerment which means inequality in economic growth does not even exist in the society because even in inequality of power is not something that attract policy priority which means among the three categories economic does not influence one another that was why they all considered with

inverse relationship from findings of the study.

Objectives of the Study

- 1: To assess the need for awareness of Women Empowerment in India.
- 2: To know the role of women in economic, political and social arena.
- 3: To change the approach towards women based on sex discrimination.
- 4: To study the Government Schemes and suggestions for Women Empowerment. 5: To identify the hindrance in the Path of Women Empowerment.
- 6: To create opportunities for them so that they can prove themselves in society and social institutions.

Hypothesis of the Study

- 1: There is progressive way of awareness in India for Women Empowerment.
- 2: There is equal contribution of women in economic, political and social arena.
- 3: There will be changes in opinion about the approach towards women based on sex discrimination.
- 4: The Government has launched different Schemes and suggestions For Women Empowerment. 5: There are different types of barriers in the Path of Women Empowerment.
- 6: Women are able to self-create opportunities for themselves that can improve empowerment in society and social institutions.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on descriptive and analytical pattern of research. In this study an attempt has been taken to identify and analyze the empowerment of women in India scenario. For the present study researcher has taken purely secondary sources according to the need of this study. The source of secondary data are newspaper, government reports, magazines, articles, journals, text and reference books and many more.

Significance of Women contribution

Indian women have been associated with politics since the pre-independence period as a part of freedom movement both as volunteers as well as leaders. On independence, Article 15 of the Indian Constitution implies equality to women under the law. Negative affairs of state that were about half of India's population has only 10 per cent effect in the Lok Sabha.

Learning/Educational equality

Women's equality has shown a major improvement in adult literacy programs are the aspects of enrolment of boys and girls in schools. Due to higher participation of women in literacy campaigns, the gender gap in literacy levels is gradually reduced. We have to make some educational awareness programmes on gender equality and women empowerment for cementing our commitment in favour of women's.

Government Schemes/Programmes for Women Empowerment/Development from 1974 to present;

1. Rastriya Mahila Kosh, 1992-1993
2. Mahila Samridhi Yojana, October, 1993.
3. Indira Mahila Yojana, 1995.
4. Women Entrepreneur Development programme given top priority in 1997-98.

5. Seva Shakti Group.
6. Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women.
7. Swavlamban.
8. Crèches/ Day care centre for the children of working and align mother.
9. National Mission for Empowerment of Women.
10. Integrated Child Development Services, 1975.
11. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls, 2010.
12. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
13. Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment.
14. Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana.

Empowerment of Women in India

There are different Acts and Schemes of the central Government as well as state Government to empower the women of India which are in limelight. In India women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social, political and economic participation.

According to 2021 census, rate of literacy among men in India is found to be 80% whereas it is only 65.46% among women. Increasing education among women is very important in their empowerment. Women harassment, cases of rape, kidnapping, dowry harassment, and so on. For these reasons, they require empowerment of all kinds in order to protect themselves and to secure their purity and dignity.

Concerns/Issues and Challenges/Problems of Women Empowerment in India

There are several constraints that verify the process of women empowerment in India. Social norms and family structure in developing countries like India, manifests and perpetuate the subordinate status of women. In many parts of India there is a belief that the male child inherits the clan. Women internalize the traditional concept of their role as natural thus inflicting an injustice upon them.

There are several Concerns/Issues and Challenges/ Problems of Women Empowerment in India:-

- **Education:** Percentage of women education is low in India especially in the rural areas because they are discouraged for higher education like professional and technical education. The gender bias is in higher education, specialized professional trainings which hit women very hard in employment and attaining top leadership in any field.
- **Poverty:** The greatest threat to peace in the world, and eradication of poverty should be a national goal as important as the eradication of illiteracy.
- **Sexual harassment:** Exploitation of a girl child at home, streets, public places, transports, offices, etc by the family members, neighbors, friends or relatives.
- **Child Marriages:** Marriage of the girls in the teenage by their parents in order to be escaped from dowry.

Gender Discrimination: Women are discriminated in the society and given less importance. Girl child are becoming real victims of the discrimination. Gender discrimination affects women in the areas like nutrition, education, and healthcare, decline of female population, job and public life.

1. **Unemployment:** Women are facing acute unemployment problem and if at all employed they face problems in work place. They become more prone to the exploitation and harassment in the work place. Constitutional Provisions for Empowering Women in India
2. Equality before law for all persons (Article-14).
3. Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15(I)).
4. However, special provisions may be made by the state in favors of women and children Article 15(3).
5. Equality of opportunity for all citizens relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state (Article 16).
6. State policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39(a); (v) equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d).
7. Provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 42).
8. Promotion of harmony by every citizen of India and renouncement of such practices which are derogatory to the dignity of women Article 51A (e).

Findings

1. Globalization, Liberalization and other Socio - Economic forces have given boost to large proportion of the population.
2. There are several Government programmes and NGOs in the Country; there is still a wide gap that exists between both of them.
3. Poverty and illiteracy add complications to these; The Empowerment of Women begins with a guarantee of their health and security.
4. Empowerment of Women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies.

Suggestions

1. More importance should be given to the education of women, which is the basic problem.
2. Awareness programmes are required to be organized for forming awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections.
3. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough security and support to work. They should be treated with proper wages and work at par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society.
4. Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts is essential.

Conclusion

Education is an imperative tool in women empowerment. There is a need of an egalitarian society where everybody whether men or women get the equal opportunity to express and uplift one's wellbeing. Women all over the world, including Southern countries, it has been challenging and changing gender inequalities since the beginning of the history. Women represent half the world's population and gender inequality exists in every nation on the planet. "The family, villages and Nations will move only when the women will". It is necessary as their thought and their value systems lead the development of a good family, good society and ultimately a good nation. The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducting women in the mainstream of development. Women empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. The Empowerment of Women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century at both national as well as international level. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of decision making and participation in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality. Women participation a very important role in making a nation progressive and guide it towards development. The education of women is the most powerful tool to change the position of society.

References :

- Duflo E. (2011) Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge.
- R. Kanbur (2002): Education, Empowerment and Gender Inequalities, Cornell University, New York, USA, www.people.cornell.edu/pages/sk145 sk145@cornell.edu.
- R. K. Rao (2001): Women and Education, Kalpaz Publications, Delhi.
- Bhat T. (2014) Women Education in India Need of the Ever. Human Rights International research journal: Vol. 1 p.3.
- Suguna, M., (2011): Education and Women Empowerment in India. ZENITH: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 1(8), 19-21.
- Government of India, Census of India 20011.

Om Singh Dr. Paresh Diwved , (2017): Sociological study on concerns and problems of women empowerment and education in India: SHODH SARITA Vol. 3, Issue 12, October-December, 2017 Page Nos. 203-208