



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Women have a distinct role to play in the development of the nation. In the role of mother, a woman shapes the personality and character of children and hence the 'character of nation'. As a housewife, maintains the productivity of the human capital of making a contribution to the economy of the nation. All from this a woman herself represents a unit of human capital, and is therefore capable of making a contribution to the economy of the nation. Nehru had said "you can tell the condition of the nation by looking at the state of women." And the following phrase of Manusmriti, "Na Stree Swathantryam Arhati" (woman undeserving for independence), reflects our whole attitude towards women in our country. Women suffer discrimination and injustice in all stages of her life. Empowerment is a process which generates changes in our ideas and perceptions and create awareness about one's rights and opportunities for self-development in all important sphere of life. Women empowerment is an important issue addressed by all nations who prepare themselves for national development. Women constitute nearly half of our population, so they cannot be left out of any endeavor for building up the nation.

INTRODUCTION:

Status of Indian Women: Past, Present and Future-

In the Indian society the status of women has changed from time to time. In ancient period women enjoyed equal status with men in all field of life. In medieval period, the status of women went down considerably. She was considered to be inferior to man. During the Muslim period of history they were deprived of the rights of equality with men. In the modern period, due to movement against women's subjugation to men and British influence on Indian culture and civilization, the position of women has once again undergone a change to that of men, socially, economically, educationally, politically and

legally. Her sufferings from sati, child marriage, institution of temple prostitution do not longer exist. Now she has right to receive education, inherit and own property, participate in public life and political life of nation. She has become economically independent. She can seek employment anywhere and does not remain a domestic slave anymore. So, she is enjoying the equal status with men in all respects. For this change in the status of women, several factors like women's education are held responsible. Women's bill which passed in Rajya Sabha will definitely improve the participation of women in government. There is no denying the fact that women in India have made a considerable progress in the last sixty years, yet they have to struggle against



many handicaps, social evils and discrimination in the male dominated society. In contemporary India, women occupy a paradoxical status.

On the one hand, there are goddess featuring in the Hindu pantheon and reverted by men, On the other hand, some wives are burnt because they did not brought dowries in marriage. In this context, empowerment of women becomes a very important issue for the policy makers, Intellectuals, social activists etc.

A glance at some important data below reflects the worldwide situation of women.

1. Of world's one billion illiterate, 67 percent are women.
2. Out of the world's 1.3 billion poor, nearly 70 percent are women.
3. Women hold only 11 percent of the seats in world's parliament.
4. Only 24 women have been elected as heads of government in the last century.
5. Women work approximately twice the unpaid time men do.
6. The value of women's unpaid house work and community work is estimated at 35% of GDP worldwide.
7. Out of 130 million children worldwide 2/3 are girls who are not in school.
8. Out of world's 27 million refugees 75-80 percent are women and children.
9. Rural women produce more than 55 percent of all food grown in developing countries.

Conclusion

The constitution of India has provided women a significant position in the socio-economic life of the nation. The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also was the stage to adopt measures of 'positive discrimination' in favor of women for neutralizing the cumulative 'socio-economic, educational and political disadvantage' faced by them. The women's movement and a wide spread network of various government organization non-government Organisation which have grass roots presence and deep insight into women's concerns have contributed in inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women.

But despite all these measures there should be a strong determination among every man that every woman in this country should be honored. Only then empowerment in its true meaning will be realizes. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women and to make them realize that they have the potential to be strong human beings. Thus, a clear vision is needed to remove the obstacles to the path of women's emancipation both from the government and women themselves. Efforts should be directed towards all round development of each and every section of Indian women by giving them their due share.

A women is different by nature. Yet this difference doesn't mean inferiority. Her economic independence counts the most. If a



woman is economically dependent, she becomes dependent almost everywhere .If

motherhood is an obstacle in her economic independence, she will either have to discard it or has to be a dependent person forever. Both the things are not fair in any case. For development of the latest talents of woman, she must have freedom to work besides facilities regarding motherhood, maternity and her responsibilities regarding to her offspring. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. Legislatures such as Equal Remuneration Act, Factories Act: Constitutional safeguards such as maternity relief and other provisions should be strictly followed. Through economic empowerment women's emancipation could be realized.

Most important thing is that the ultimate attitude of men should change towards women. As government provides some reservation to backward communities so that they should come up with others,

same thing should happen with working women. Working women should get some facilities and relaxation in working time, so that they can manage both the fronts home as well as work and prove themselves to be successful women. Government should make some provision in law in this regard otherwise women empowerment will be a distant dream.

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