

Issues & Challenges of Women Empowerment in India

Ms. Mangla Sood

Assistant Professor of Zoology

Govt. Auto. Girls P.G. College of Excellence, Sagar (M.P.)

Executive Summary

This paper attempts to analyze the status of Women Empowerment in India and highlights the Issues and Challenges of Women Empowerment. Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence. The study reveals that women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men in spite of many efforts undertaken by Government. The study concludes by an observation that access to Education, Employment and Change in Social Structure are only the enabling factors to Women Empowerment.

Introduction

Women empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities of women. Women's empowerment in India is heavily dependent on many different variables that include geographical location (urban / rural) educational status social status (caste and class) and age. Policies on Women's empowerment exist at the national, state and local (Panchayat) levels in many sectors, including health, education, economic opportunities, gender based violence and political participation. However, there are significant gap between policy advancements and actual practice at the community level. Empowerment of women is essentially the process of upliftment of economic, social and political status of women, the traditionally underprivileged ones, in the society. It is the process of guarding them against all forms of violence.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the need of Women Empowerment.
2. To assess the Awareness of Women Empowerment in India.
3. To analyze the Factors influencing the Economic Empowerment of Women.
4. To study the Government Schemes for Women Empowerment.
5. To identify the Hindrances in the Path of Women Empowerment.
6. To offer useful Suggestions in the light of Findings.

Ways to Empower Women

1. Changes in women's mobility and social interaction
2. Changes in women's access to and control over resources
3. Changes in women's control over Decision making
4. Providing education
5. Self-employment and Self-help groups
6. Providing minimum needs like Nutrition, Health, Sanitation, Housing

Reasons for The Empowerment of Women

In India, women are discriminated and marginalized at every level of the society whether it is social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education, and also reproductive healthcare. Women are found to be economically very poor all over the India. Thus, increasing education among women is very important in empowering them. It has also noticed that some of women are too weak to work. They consume less food but work more. Therefore, from the health point of view, women folk who are weaker are to be made stronger. Another problem is that workplace harassment of women. There are so many cases of rape, kidnapping of girl, 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.

Challenges

There are several constraints that check 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. One of the norms is the continuing preference for a son over the birth of a girl child which is present in almost all societies and communities. There are several challenges that are plaguing the issues of women's right in India. Targeting these issues will directly benefit the empowerment of women in India

Education: While the country has grown from leaps and bounds since independence where education is concerned. the gap between women and men is severe. While 82.14% of adult men are educated, only 65.46% of adult women are known to be literate in India.

Health and Safety: There are alarming concerns where maternal healthcare is concerned.

Professional Inequality: Women face countless handicaps in male customized and dominated environs in Government Offices and Private enterprises.

Morality and Inequality: Due to gender bias in health and nutrition there is unusually high mortality rate in women reducing their population

Household Inequality: Household relations show gender bias in infinitesimally small but significant manners all across the globe, more so, in India

Suggestions

1. The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grassroots problem.
2. Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.
3. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work.
4. Strict implementation of Programmes and Acts should be there to curb the mal-practices prevalent in the society.

Conclusion

Women all over the world, including countries in the west and south, have been subjected to 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. Until women are given the same opportunities that men are, entire societies will be destined to perform below their true potentials. The greatest need of the hour is change of social attitude to women. The best way of empowerment is perhaps through inducing 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 not only at national level but also at the international level. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. Society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self-decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality.

References

- [1]. Duflo E. (2011) Women's Empowerment and Economic Development, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge.
- [2]. India: Women's Empowerment - IFAD/OE, 2000. The Republic of India; TamilNadu Women's Development Project: Completion Evaluation, Report 340 – IN Rome, April.
- [3]. Baruah B. (2013) Role of Electronic Media in Empowering Rural.
- [4]. Goswami, L. (2013). Education for Women Empowerment. ABHIBYAKTI: Annual Journal, 1, 17-18.
- [5]. Baruah, B. (2013). Role of Electronic Media in Empowering Rural Women Education of N.E. India. ABHIBYAKTI: Annual Journal, 1, 23-26.
- [6]. Kadam, R. N. (2012). Empowerment of Women in India- An Attempt to Fill the Gender Gap. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 2(6), 11-13.
- [7]. Nagaraja, B. (2013). Empowerment of Women in India: A Critical Analysis. Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSRJHSS), 9(2), 45-52 [WWW page]. URL <http://www.iosrjournals.Org/empowerment.html>.