

Women Empowerment; THROUGH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment of women is a major social phenomenon which requires an understanding of its multi-dimensional influence, including our family structures and units. The 2011 Census contains an important message because it is far from a balanced gender ratio. More worrisome is the child sex ratio in the 0-6 age group as it reflects the continuing bias against girls. The challenge is to work towards a balanced population and if these prejudices are to be overcome, the rights of women need to be protected. Greater access to education, health, skill building, credit facilities and opportunities for decision making and legal rights should be made available to women to empower them. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in our Constitution which guarantees equality to women, and empowers the State to adopt measures of positive determination in favour of women for removing the cumulative socio-economic, educational disadvantages faced by them. Within a framework of democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. The government has several programmes which cover welfare and support services, awareness generation and gender sensitization. These programmes play a supplementary role to other developmental programmes in health, education, agriculture and rural development sectors. All these efforts are directed to make women economically and socially empowered so that they can become equal and active partners in national development along with men. The National Policy for Empowerment of Women, 2001 has outlined three policy approaches to do away with gender inequality. It has been proposed to make the legal system more responsive and gender sensitive to women's needs. Moreover, women must be economically and socially empowered through focussed efforts. Statistics showed the overall picture of gender inequality in India is stark and the way out is not to camouflage reality by resolving to tokenism and parading exceptions, but tackling problems head on. But mere Government intervention is not enough. Better results can be produced by determined women citizens empowering themselves and being encouraged to do so by enlightened segments of society and public opinion. Government of India's policy on women development has undergone various shift of emphasis since

independence. The most significant changes occurred during the Fifth Five Year Plan with the shift from welfare to development. During the Eighth Plan, there was a renewed emphasis on development of women as equal partners in the development process. Today, with focus on inclusive growth, there is a heightened awareness about inclusiveness and empowerment. Women need to empower themselves from below, and this calls for a change of values and behavior and the need for economic empowerment. All problems centre around inequality and therefore, steps to promote equality of treatment and full integration of women in the development of the country must be promoted

KEY WORDS

1.EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN .

2.EQUALITY OF STATUS AND OPPORTUNITY .

3.INCLUSIVE GROWTH .

INTRODUCTION -

India has been working towards empowering her women since independence, and especially since the 1990s. The government and non-government sectors have both been pushing ahead with programmes aimed at imparting education to women, giving them better health care, providing them with means of livelihood and opportunities to participate in the decision making process at home and in the society. Special attention is being paid to improve the lot of the girl child giving her better chances of survival and opportunities for living a life of fulfilment. The 73rd Amendment to our constitution in 1993 was a major milestone in this direction. The amendment, besides making provision for reservation of seats for scheduled castes and tribes proportionate to their population in the panchayat area, also ensured reservation of not less than one third of these reserved seats for the women. The impact of reserving Empowered Women, empowered nation women's empowerment Shahin Razi review The empowerment process encompasses several mutually reinforcing components but begins with and is supported by economic independence, which implies access to and control over production resources one third of seats for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has been fruitful, and has empowered women both politically and socially. At present, there are approximately 260,000 panchayat representatives in India, out of which around 75,000 are women making it the largest number of elected women in the world.

. While reservation in panchayats or Parliament is important, the real challenge is to ensure that women are involved in the decision making process at home, and in the society. The challenge will be to develop their capacity so that they can perform their roles properly. But

more than half-a-century after independence, shackles remain tightly bound around women's feet. It begins at birth as the evidence of female foeticide and gender bias in the richer states of Punjab, Delhi and Haryana shows, sparing neither the villager nor the urban sophisticate. From such inauspicious beginnings comes the sorry story of sexual assaults, dowry harassment and deaths, biased healthcare, low literacy, discrimination at the workplace and subjugation at home – the dismal list is endless and difficult to escape. Women have always had lower status than men, but the extent of the gap between the sexes varies across cultures and time.

LITRATURE REVIEW

In 1980, the United Nations summed up the burden of this inequality: Women who comprise half the world's population, do two thirds of the world's work, earn one tenth of the world's income and own one hundredth of the world's property. Statistical data of women all around the world Of the world's 1.3 billion poor, nearly 70 percent are women .Between 76-80 percent of the world's 27 million refugees are women and children Women hold only 10.5 percent of the seats in world's parliament. Of the world's one billion illiterate, two thirds are women. Two thirds of 130 million children world wide, who are not in school, are girls. In most countries, women work approximately twice the unpaid time .

The Story of the Girl Child in India: - Foeticide Killing of girl foetus is still rampant in prosperous states with India's sex ratio for girls being 933 for 1,000 boys. However only 125 cases of foeticide were registered in 2006.

Schooling & Education- Fewer girls are enrolled into schools than boys, both at primary and upper primary levels. | About 50 percent girls of the total number of enrolment drop out before reaching Class VI. | Only 36.22 percent girls complete secondary education.

Health & Nourishment - On the total infant mortality cases, 59 percent are girls. Marriage In low-income groups, 49.78 percent girls are married before attaining the legal marriage age of 18.

Labour -There are more girls than boys as child labourers. A number of girl childs are trafficked for prostitution as well as for domestic help. | Highest child labour is among scheduled tribes and Muslims followed by scheduled castes.

Concept of Poverty- There is a general consensus that poor can be defined as those who are deprived of basic human needs required for their well being. It is a well known fact that the majority of women in the third world countries are deprived of the basic needs due to so many social customs and male supremacy.

Feminization of Poverty- In 1995, the Human Development Report quoted that out of 1.3 billion poor people living in developing countries. 70 percent are women. Poverty among

rural women is growing faster than among rural men. Over the past 20 years, for example, the number of women in absolute poverty rose by 50 percent as against some 30 percent for rural men. Women in India form 89 percent of the informal and unrecognized sector. Women's work participation rate is higher in rural areas, women make up for one third of the labour force of India and 90 percent of the rural and 10 percent of the urban women workers are unskilled.

CURRENT STATUS -

Women in india -

Constitutional Guarantee : The Constitution of India guarantees to all women, equality (Article 14); no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)); equality of opportunity (Article 16); equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)); renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(a) (c)). The Constitution also allows the State to make special provision in favour of women and children (Article 15(3)); and securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief (Article 42). The Government of India declared 2001 as the “**Year of Women's Empowerment**” and the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women came into force from 2001.

Women farmer and Agriculture : India has been an agrarian country. Women constitute about 66 percent of the agricultural work force. Around 48 percent self-employed farmers are women and 64 percent of the informal sector work force depending on agriculture is women. Rural women have, since many centuries, been putting in unfathomable, unbearable and inadequately paid joyless drudgery to earn for their families livelihood and provide food security to country's 1.13 billion people. The plight of most rural women has been pathetic since they have to collect firewood, fetch drinking water, search fodder to feed cattle, work on their meagre land to raise crops and work as labourers on other farms, take care of children etc. Hunger and deprivation affect about 260 million people in the country. India is home to 40 percent of the world's underweight children and ranks 126 out of 177 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index.

Self-Help Groups : Self-Help Group Linkage Bank programme has covered 3.47 million SHGs and 45.1 million households. More than 90 percent SHGs comprise women borrowers. Women, despite their unbearable hardships and commitments to their children for food, health and education, have beyond doubt demonstrated their loyalty to financing banks through over 95 percent repayment of loans. Despite this, they have difficulties to get long-term loans and adequate loan of high value.

Elected Women Representatives : The developed economics of USA and Europe have already demonstrated strict compliance with laws concerning women's rights and status through most effective Law and Order enforcing machinery and efficient judicial system. Since India is expected to emerge as a super economic power the publicly elected women representatives (existing and future) in PRIs, State Legislative Assemblies, Parliament and

Rajya Sabha may need to demonstrate serious concern and commitment to strengthen Law and Order enforcing machinery at all levels, make it effective and accountable specifically in respect of following aspects in which cases it has proved to be grossly ineffective.

Weak Enforcement -: Although child marriage has been banned since 1860 and the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed in 1929, it is still a common practice. The worst feature of the child marriage has been the child widows are condemned to a life of great agony, shaving heads, living in isolation and shunned by the society. **According to UNICEF's "State of World Children, 2009" report 47 percent of India's women aged 20 to 24 were married before the prescribed legal age of 18 years, - 56 percent in rural areas. About 40 percent of world's child marriages occur in India.**

The immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act was passed in 1956, yet cases of immoral trafficking of young girls and women have been increasing. In 1961, Government of India passed the Dowry Prohibition Act. Though all medical tests determining the sex of the child have been banned, India has a high male sex ratio. The chief reason is that many girls die before being born or reaching to adulthood. This is attributed to the female infanticide and sex selective abortions. **The dowry tradition has been one of the main reasons for sex selective abortion and female infanticide.** The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act was passed in 1987. However, several incidences of its violation do occur off and on. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) came into force on October 26, 2006. Yet the incidence of domestic violence is higher in lower socio-economic classes. Police records show high incidence of crimes against women. The National Crime Research Bureau in 1998 reported that the growth rate of crimes against women would be higher than population growth rate by 2010. Many cases are not registered with police due to the social stigma attached to rape and molestation cases or inaction on the part of police. Official statistics (1990) showed a dramatic increase in the number of crimes against women related to molestation and sexual harassment at work place

Female-headed Household -: According to 1992-93 year data, while only 9.2 percent of households in India were female-headed, about 35 percent of the households below poverty line were female-headed.

Land and Property Rights -: In most Indian families, women do not own any property in their own names and do not get a share of parental property. Some of the laws discriminate against women, when it comes to land and property rights. Married daughters, when faced with marital harassment, have no residential rights in the ancestral home.

Education - Studies confirm that female literacy has a significant influence in improving social and economic status of women. The female literacy rate is woefully lower than that of male. Compared to boys, far fewer girls are enrolled in schools and many of them are drop out.

Health and Family Planning :-The average female life expectancy in India is low compared to many countries. In many families, particularly in rural areas the girls and women

and mothers face nutritional discrimination within the family and are anaemic. and malnourished. The maternal mortality in India is the second highest in the world. The health professionals supervise only 42 percent of births in the country. **According to UNDP Human Development Report 88 percent of pregnant women (age 15-49 years) were suffering from anaemia.** The average woman in rural areas has little or no control over her potential for reproductivity.

Work Participation- : Though the country has a large percentage of women workers, there is a serious underestimation of women's contribution as workers **to nation's economy**. There are, however, fewer women in the paid work force than those of men. In rural areas, agriculture and allied sector employed 89.5 percent of total female labour. Women's average contribution, in overall farm output, is estimated at 55 percent to 66 percent of the total labour. **According to World Bank report, women accounted for 94 percent of total employment in dairy sector. Women contributed 51 percent of total employment in forest-based small-scale enterprises.**

OBJECT OF STUDY -

Empowering Women for women entrepreneurship in Indian economy - The Government of India observes three dimensional strategies for development of women, namely social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice and has made development of women as one of the principal objectives of the five year plans. The Government has given greater focus to issues relating to women through creation of an independent Ministry of Women and Child Development, initiation of legislation that has taken the country closer to complete legal equality for women, gender budgeting and initiation of programmes for greater inclusion of women in all walks of life.

1- The Government initiated the protection of women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, which has given more effective protection to women who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within a family and provided them a civil remedy to deal with such violence.

2- The Government initiated the Hindus Succession Act, 1955 to make Hindu Women's inheritance rights in coparcenary property equal to that of men.

3-Amendments initiated by the Government have been enacted prohibited arrests of women after sunset and before sunrise, medical examination of persons accused of committing or attempting to commit rape, and mandatory judicial inquiry in case of rape while in police custody.

4-The Government has introduced a bill in Parliament to amend the Factories Act, 1948 in order to provide flexibility in the employment of women at night while requiring the employer to ensure measures for safety and protection, and thereby generate employment opportunities for women

Financial Focus- The Government has introduced **gender budgeting** for improving the sensitivity of programmes and schemes to women's welfare. The budgetary outlay for 100 percent women-specific programme has been rising every year.

Ensuring that at least 33 percent of the beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children has been laid down as a key target in the 11th Plan.

Women's Reservation- A bill for introducing one third reservation for women in legislatures was drafted. In an effort to build a consensus, the Government held meetings with all opposition parties and with all UPA constituent parties. Discussions were also held with women's groups and other stakeholders.

Girls' Education- approximately 12,180 residential Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Schools have been sanctioned and are providing elementary education to 1,82,000 out of school girls.

Women officers in the Army- All officers, including those in short service commission, are now eligible to hold substantive rank of captain, major and lieutenant colonel after two, six and 13 years of reckonable service respectively and tenure of short service commission officers has been made extendable from 10 years to 14 years, ensuring parity for women officers with their male counterparts.

Conclusion

. Fortunately, the story of Indian women, like that of their sisters elsewhere, has been one of unvarnished courage and sheer grit. Each Women's Day that passes, despite the dingy statistics, there is enough anecdotal evidence of women who have grabbed their destiny into their own hands, expanding the envelope of their achievement. We see these success stories everyday and everywhere at the workplace, the arena of sports and entertainment and, of course, the home.

Women's Empowerment - depicts a unified force. The necessary thought difficult task of building a just and fairer nation is possible only with meaningful partnerships between men and women. To move the chariot of our country forward both the wheels – men and women have to be strong and have to move ahead jointly.

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