

E-CONTENT

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SUBJECT :WOMEN EMPOWERMENT
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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Women Empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. Women empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender or economic strength of individuals and communities of women.

It refers to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights,

such as: to make their own choices and decisions, have equal rights to participate in social, religious and public activities, have equal social status in the society, freely live their life with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity, have complete control of their life, both within and outside of their home and workplace, have equal rights for social and economic justice, determine financial and economic choices, get equal opportunity for education, get equal employment opportunity without any gender bias and get safe and comfortable working environment. Women have the rights to get their voices heard.

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Under-employed and unemployed: Women population constitutes around 50% of the world population. A large number of women around the world are unemployed. The world economy suffers a lot because of the unequal opportunity for women at workplaces.

Equally competent and intelligent: Women are equally competent. Nowadays, women are even ahead of men in many socio-economic activities.

Talented: Women are as talented as men. Previously, women were not allowed higher education like men and hence their talents were wasted. But nowadays, they are also allowed to go for higher studies and it encourages women to show their talents which will not only benefit her individually but to the whole world at large.

Overall development of society: The main advantage of Women Empowerment is that there will be an overall development of the society. The money that women earn does not only help them and or their family, but it also help develop the society.

Economic Benefits: Women Empowerment also leads to more economic benefits not to the individuals but to the society as well. Unlike earlier days when they stayed at home only and do only kitchen stuffs, nowadays, they roam outside and also earns money like the male members of the society. Women empowerment helps women to stand on their own legs, become independent and also to earn for their family which grows country's economy.

Economics Scenario – Political Scenario

Reduction in domestic violence: Women Empowerment leads to decrease in domestic violence. Uneducated women are at higher risk for domestic violence than an educated women.

Reduction in corruption: Women Empowerment is also advantageous in case of corruption. Women empowerment helps women to get educated and know their rights and duties and hence can stop corruption.

Reduce Poverty: Women Empowerment also reduces poverty. Sometimes, the money earned by the male member of the family is not sufficient to meet the demands of the family. The added earnings of women helps the family to come out of poverty trap.

National Development: Women are increasingly participating in the national development process. They are making the nation proud by their outstanding performances almost every spheres including medical science, social service, engineering, etc.

Irreplaceable in some sectors: Women are considered irreplaceable for certain jobs

Constitution of India and Women Development

India has pledged itself to gender equality through several Articles of the constitution.

- **Article 14** – Men and women to have equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
- **Article 15(1)** – Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex etc..
- **Article 15(3)** – Special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in favor of women.
- **Article 16** – Equality of opportunity in matter of public appointments for all citizens.
- **Article 39(a)** – The state shall direct its policy towards securing all citizens. Men and women, equality, the right to means of livelihood.
- **Article 39(d)** – Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 42** – The state to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- **Article 51(A)(e)** – To renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

The 73rd constitution Amendment Act 1993 was a form of affirmative action to reserve 33 percent of the total seats for all three tiers of panchayats and functionaries of women.

Government Schemes For Women Empowerment

- Rastria Mahila Kosh (RMK) 1992-1993
- Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) October, 1993.
- Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) 1995.
- Women Entrepreneur Development programme given top priority in 1997-98.
- Mahila Samakhya being implemented in about 9000 villages.
- Swayasjdha.
- Swa Shakti Group.
- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP).
- Swalamban.
- Crèches/ Day care centre for the children of working and ailing mother.
- Hostels for working women.
- Swadhar.
- National Mission for Empowerment of Women.
- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975),
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescence Girls (RGSEAG) (2010).
- The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
- Integrated Child Protection scheme (ICPS) (2009-2010).
- Dhanalakahmi (2008).
- Short Stay Homes.
- Ujjawala (2007).
- Scheme for Gender Budgeting (XI Plan).
- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

Policies and Programmes of Women Empowerment in India

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- The de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil;
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation;
- Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc;
- Strengthening legal system aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women;
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process;
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girls child;
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

Women Empowerment Programmes and India's Five Year Plans

- In India, five year plans from the beginning have given special attention to general as well as special programmes for the welfare of women. Government programmes for women's development begin as early as 1954 in India. economic activities begin only in 1974 with the report of the committee on the status of women in India.
- In the Seventies the government dealt with women's development issues as part of wide category of poverty alleviation. In the eighties special programmes for women as a top priority item.
- During the Nineties the National Commission for Women Act 1990 was set up to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the constitution of Indian have provided 33 percent of the total seats for all three tiers of panchayats and functionaries of women. The idea was to facilitate women's participation in grass roots policies there by empowering them to become partners in the decision making process.
- The Eighth five year plan (1992-97) promises to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women. Special programmes are to be implemented to complement the general development programmes.

Women Empowerment Programmes and India's Five Year Plans

The Ninth plan (1997-2002) made two significant changes in the conceptual strategy of planning for women.

Firstly empowerment of women became one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth plan.

Secondly the plan attempted convergence of existing services available in both women specific and women – related sectors.

During the year 2001, the national policy for empowerment of women (2001), the main goal of the policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women.

objective of this policy:

equal access to participation and decision- making of women in social political and economic life of the nation. The empowerment of rural women is crucial for the development of the rural Bharat.

National policy approach to the Tenth plan (2002-2007) for empowering women will now stand on a strong platform for action with definite goals targets and a time-frame as the promotion of gender equality through social, political and economic empowerment of women is one of the central concerns.

During the Eleventh five year plan (2007-2012) the government is planning to ensure that at least 33 percent of all direct and indirect benefits of all schemes flow to women and girl children.

Tamil Nadu Women Development Project (Mahalir Thittam)

Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project, funded by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), was started on an experimental basis during 1991-92 in Dharmapuri district. It received its first growth thrust and was extended to Salem, South Arcot, Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts during the period from 1992 to 1994. By 1995-96, the project is well established and was taken up as a model for future growth and then extended to all other districts in a phased manner under the State Budget.

This project, more popularly known as "Mahalir Thittam", is implemented with the support of Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and banks. It is functioning through a network of women's Self- Help Groups(SHGs), established and monitored with the assistance of NGOs. The project also plans for the growth of SHGs, movement with a view to promote sustainability combined with deepening of coverage at habitations and ward/slums in urban areas.

Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

Tamil Nadu Women Development Project and Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) scheme implemented by the Rural Development Department have been converged for Rural SHGs and common guidelines and norms have been adopted. Similarly, in respect of SHGs in Urban areas, Swarna Jayanthi Shehari Rozgar Yojana(SJSRY) and Tamil Nadu Women Development Project are being operated in a converged manner.

Tamil Nadu Women Development Project (Mahalir Thittam)

The government is supporting and motivating women from families below poverty line to join SHGs and shall achieve the plan of covering another 15 lacks women over the next three years. Entrepreneurship Development Training followed by Vocational and skill Training is being given as a special thrust for the benefit of SHG members to start their own Micro Enterprises

The focus area of this project for 2005-2006 will be:

Socio- economic empowerment of minority Community, Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe women are protecting them against exploitation, by making them join the SHG movement. Facilitating markets for SHG products through arrangement of marketing facilities such as shops at public places like bus stands, Government commercial complexes, etc., were helping SHGs to participate in the national, state, district level and block level marketing workshops will also be conducted to familiarize the SHG women with marketing techniques and to the concepts of quality, pricing, packaging and promotion.

A special skill training on 'Preserving and Processing of Fish Products' will be imparted to the SHG fisher women in the coastal districts.

Women Recreation Centres:

Apart from the needs of nutrition, health, education, etc., the need of recreation for working poor women is very important. Women recreation centres have therefore been created at village panchayat level for the benefit of SHGs. The members of the SHGs use these centres to meet, interact and discuss matters of interest, play games, etc. With the other SHG women.

Newspapers and weekly/ monthly magazines including Mutram are also made available for reading to the SHG members and their children by these centers. There are 300 WRCs functioning in Tamil Nadu including 25 WRCs established during 2004-2005. About 60,000 SHG members including 20,000 SC/ST women are benefited by this Scheme.

State Policy for Women:

This government has been effectively implemented a state policy for women that guides the developmental policies of all departments and sectors which help to eliminate gender gaps and enable women to gain equitable access to resources, decision-making and improved quality of life.

In order to mainstream gender in all government policies and departments, a women's development report, including women development index and women empowerment indicators, is being commissioned to measure and evaluate the impact of the government's pro-women policies and programs annually. Mother Theresa University has taken up this project and is in the process of preparing the report.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Macro level:

➤ According to Anthony Giddens (1991, 1994, 2000) Globalizing forces have influenced the transformation of Society from traditional to modern to high modern Society. The traditional Society or pre-industrial Society predominantly based on communal structures, had the feeling. With the rise of modern structures and the associations based on shared interests in Modern Society, the feeling was replaced by a set of abstract, atomized individuals, thus, replacing the earlier Society.

➤ Scott, 1994, observes that the High modern society/risk- society⁶ again replaced the Modern Society with innovation of electronic communications systems and the Risk Society has set individuals free from modern abstract structures. Society and individual identity: The very individual identity changes even with the change in the type of Society.

➤ In the Traditional Society, it is the collectivities like Group, Community etc. prescribe the individuals not only what is done is done in the Society but „what should be done in a Society;

➤ The self identity in modern Society becomes more freed from traditional identities in terms of Kinship, Clan, Caste, family identities etc. with stress on atomization and individuation.

MESO Level:

The post- Liberalization era saw radical changes in Economy causing a corresponding change in Statism. The post liberalized Economy, better known as the New Economy, is the Economy of Internet Industry i.e. of dot.com firms. Here, Internet provided the medium of networking organization, information- processing and knowledge generation. It has transformed the old Economy to its global reach with the capacity to work as a unit in real time on a planetary scale (Castells 2001).

This form of Economic Globalization leads to a major transformation in territorial organization of economic activity with geographic dispersal of firms and factories and virtualization of economic activities is evident from the growing number of economic activities taking place in electronic space (Sassen 2006). Castells (1997) termed the new system of business organization as the Networ Enterprise and is the situation where networking logic based on working on-line with the networked units in real time. It advocates organizational flexibility of firms in contravention of rule-based mechanized Fordist structure.

Micro level

In the Network Enterprise, work-force is an important resource for productivity, innovation and competitiveness. The individual is dependent on labor market and it is the labor market that shapes the individual identity. Castells (1997) points out as to how self-programmable labor, who works on Net, develop a distinct kind of identity of self. Identity of people is increasingly organized not around what they do but on the basis of what they are, or believe they are. The workforces need to match their portfolio careers.

They are entrusted total commitment for the business projects i.e. they need to keep it up with their project-based work-lives that may necessitate expanded working hours. Henceforth, their identity is structured around binary logic based on in/out, switch on/off as individuals, groups, regions and countries and structured for fulfilling project goals of network. T

Here fore, the workforces do not develop any strong sense of local or national or organizational identity in relation to a particular firm. Consequently, a new system of social relationship emerges centered round the individual i.e. me centered (tertiary relationships). It is a specific pattern of sociability i.e. individualized relationship to the society rooted in the individualization of relationship within the workplace between the workers and the work process replacing primary relationships (embodied in families and communities) and secondary relationships (embodied in associations).

The author points out that this leads to crisis in patriarchalism and traditional nuclear family. Castells (2001) further observes that the emergence of new pattern of sociability is centered on networked individualism where individuals build their networks, on-line and off-line, on the basis of their interests, values, affinities and projects.

CHALLENGES

To capitalize on the opportunities for women empowerment provided by Information Technology it is important to increase internet connectivity in remote villages. The other challenges are:

1. Poor regulation, and support for women working in informal sector.
2. Poor awareness of ICT for women.
3. Lack of e-commerce related infrastructure in developing countries.
4. Language barriers for the use of ICT for non English speakers.
5. Paternal set up of Indian society.
6. Poor Internet Usage: Women form a very small part of the internet population in the country, with working and non - working women accounting for only 8 per cent and 7 per cent of the internet users“ universe.
7. Conservative outlook for working women.
8. Challenges of managing career and family.

OPPORTUNITIES

Nasscom estimates that the male: female ratio in IT industry has improved from 70:24 in 2005 to 70:30 now. IT reduces the impact of barriers of time and distance in organizing and managing the service delivery of businesses. A large part of jobs outsourced are going to women.

The freedom to work from any where and anytime can become a catalyst for financial independence and empowerment of women by enhancing their extra income. A women entrepreneurship cell should be set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs in all states at the college level.

PROMOTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN IT

Sarada Ramani started Computer International with six employees. Now the firm has transformed into an outsourced product development company with 150 employees. Sangeeta Patni at Extensio Software builds technology in India and sells it to the rest of the world. The ten employee company has now MNC's like SAP, IBM, and ACC as its major clients. Rakhee Nagpal started Dynamic Vertical Solutions (DVS), an ERP solution provider for retail and hospitality industry in 2006. Its list of major clients includes D'damas, Lilliput, Devyani Group among others. AnuLall, CEO of SNARTAK IT Solutions started the business with a mere Rs.12000.

Now the firm has reputed corporate like Siemens, Satyam, Ranbaxy, Apollo Tyres and others as their client. These women entrepreneurs will become the role models and inspire many more to become entrepreneurs.

Apart from entrepreneurship other opportunities are:

- Flexibility for women to work from home.
- Women friendly working environment in IT companies.
- Enhanced access of women to distance learning.
- Access to information through e -governance initiatives of government.
- Better market access for micro enterprises through e-commerce.
- Regulatory support by government to support microfinance and mobile banking for women empowerment.

ROLE OF MEDIA

You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women. - Jawaharlal Nehru

The empowerment of women refers to providing the necessary rights and responsibilities to women in order to make them self-reliant.

According to Sen and Batliwala (2000) “Empowerment is the process by which the powerless gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives. It includes both control over resources and over ideology.

It leads to a growing intrinsic capability greater self confidence, and an inner transformation of one’s consciousness that enables one to overcome external barrier.

Women and the Media Objective

To increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.

To promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behavior, especially of children and young adults. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women.

More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that influence media policy. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in public and private local, national and international media organizations.

Women should be empowered by enhancing their skills, knowledge and access to information technology. This will strengthen their ability to combat negative portrayals of women internationally and to challenge instances of abuse of the power of an increasingly important industry.

Mass Media and Advertising Organizations

- Develop, consistent with freedom of expression, professional guidelines and codes of conduct and other forms of self-regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women;
- Establish, consistent with freedom of expression, professional guidelines and codes of conduct that address violent, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women in the media, including advertising;
- Develop a gender perspective on all issues of concern to communities, consumers and civil society;
- Increase women's participation in decision-making at all levels of the media. By the media, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in collaboration, as appropriate, with national machinery for the advancement of women:
- Promote the equal sharing of family responsibilities through media campaigns that emphasize gender equality and non-stereotyped gender roles of women and men within the family and that disseminate information aimed at eliminating spousal and child abuse and all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence;
- Produce and/or disseminate media materials on women leaders, as leaders who bring to their positions of leadership many different life experiences, including but not limited to their experiences in balancing work and family responsibilities, as mothers, as professionals, as managers and as entrepreneurs, to provide role models, particularly to young women;
- Promote extensive campaigns, making use of public and private educational programmes, to disseminate

THANK YOU