

## UNDERSTANDING GENDER EQUALITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Gender equality is first and foremost a human right. Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses, enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions. A women is entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from want and from fear. Education of women is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self confidence necessary to participate*

*KEYWORDS: Gender equality, Educational opportunities, Human rights and Women empowerment.*

### INTRODUCTION

India is one of the largest economy and one of the greatest democratic nation in the world. But generally, when we compare all the nations, India counted as a developing or a little bit developed country. India already achieved growth and maintaining a good rate. Indian economy considered in below 10<sup>th</sup> position among other countries. But development is not achieved still now. It stands as a wide and distanced goal of India. The 'development' refers to the various kinds achievement like equality among caste, religion, gender,<sup>1</sup> rural and city and along with good standard of living and the satisfying capacity of necessary needs like food, cloth, shelter etc. Now, India is in second position in terms of population. Apart of this the number of women is more. So, the women empowerment<sup>2</sup> is very essential, because of the existence of men domination and low literacy rate in women etc.

According to country report of Government of India, "Empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power". In the simplest of words Women Empowerment is basically the creation of an environment where women can make independent decisions on their personal development as well as shine as equals in society. Empowerment is the one of the key factors in determining the success of development is the status and position of

women in the society..One of the key factors in determining empowerment is the success of development in status and position of women in the society.

In this paper we focus on the goal of educational opportunity, gender equality, human rights and women's empowerment.

## **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

Education is a great determinant in this regard. To achieve empowerment, women have to be educated and aware of their rights and privileges in a modern society. It is education which can bring about awareness in them related to their social status. While the country has grown from leaps and bounds since its 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. Not only is an illiterate women at the mercy of her husband or father, she also does not know that this is not the way of life for women across the world. Additionally, the norms of culture that state that the man of the family is the be-all and end-all of family decisions is slowly spoiling the society of the country.

Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured. Special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women. Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved, with a special focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes/Minorities. Gender sensitive curricula would be developed at all levels of educational system in order to address sex stereotyping as one of the causes of gender discrimination.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

Globally, women's human rights<sup>3</sup> movements derive from an understanding that women's freedoms, equity, and equality of opportunities can be threatened in their home countries, communities, and families. Women's rights are grounded first in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948),<sup>4</sup> to which almost every country is a signatory. This international treatise mandates civil society institutions to enact constitutions, laws, and policies guaranteeing rights of all peoples without regard to their national and social identities, including their gender and sex. World conferences on women's rights in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), and Beijing (1995) reinforced rights for women as a moral, ethical, and political responsibility, which demands that women's fundamental freedom and human dignity are explicitly protected from interference in any setting worldwide.

## NEED FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In Indian culture women are subjected to gender discrimination right from the births. The female infanticide is widely prevalent even though it is highly in practice; an estimated 1.2 million lives were snuffed out either through abortion or post natal murders. The girls are also allowed to remain under nourished and, therefore, the female mortality rate is much higher than that of boys. Girl children are denied the proper educational facilities, nourishment and medical facilities. Parents and other family members think that they are burden to the family. The gender bias not only reflected on one aspect, it society reflects on political, social, economic and every point in the society reflects by the gender bias<sup>5</sup>, even in jobs also it shows impact. In many places of India and worldwide, women are denied job opportunities, because the men folk more equipped to the job, and they feel that for women right place is kitchen and rearing children. Women also have to face sexual harassment, and the position of dalit women is so worst these are all live example to discrimination which was facing by women folk.

## WHY WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

As mentioned above, Indian women community<sup>6</sup> is one of the greatest women community or section . So, it is very difficult to achieve social, political, economical and other development of the nation without a developed women community. When we analyze those countries, they achieved development like United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada etc. we can observe that the equality between men and women in opportunity and in all other respects. That is the gender equality. Generally in such developed countries women are educated, employed and also leading the society.

At the same time Indian society is entirely different, we can see the male domination in the society. Commonly they are constrained within a boundary and limits. And also it leading to ensure the disparity between men and women. But it is not good for any nation. Because the women section should be empowered, then only India can overtake its challenges and by to achieve not only the growth but also the development old India.

## CHALLENGES

The government of India conducts many programs for the purpose of empowering women<sup>7</sup>. But in reality it is not easy to establish something in such difficult and diversified community. Because India is a big country united with diversities like languages, religions, states etc. So, the women empowerment is a wide goal of India. Indian government facing many barriers and obstacles to establish women empowerment throughout the country.

One of the most important challenges is that, many violence and crimes arising against women. Some reports saying very bad things like, in India a new crime arises against women in every seven minutes. To ensure the development of women, the government should take immense action against those persons who are conducts crimes and other illegal activities against women.

Many other social evils are reporting about the crimes against women. Even in the 21th century female infanticide is increasing. It is not good, by this practice it establishes male domination and ensure gender inequality between men and women.

Child marriage and dowry system seen women as trade goods. These kinds of evils are the greatest evils existing in Indian society against women. It should be removed from the country to enhance the women empowerment.

Another greatest challenge facing by the Indian women society is the law literacy rate among women. Even many Doctors, Engineers, Researchers and other professional are women, it is not in the case of rural area. when we take rural or very remote area, we can observe that the presents of many illiterate women. It led to pull down Indian women community to its backwardness.

## **HOW TO OVERTAKE THESE CHALLENGES**

Since women empowerment is very essential for all countries to achieve its development, the country should find out how these challenges are actually solve.

Women empowerment says about the empowerment of women community, there are many ways available to overtake these challenges or obstacles.

In the old era of India, women considered as a symbol of respects and they played a vital role in the Indian society to build the golden culture of India. After the 17<sup>th</sup> century many women lead India. There is no doubt in the leadership quality of women. Because traditionally they managed family and other matters, even in trade. The Indus Vally civilization was the best example of a developed women community. Because in such civilization era can see the active women participation in trade and other social activities.

There after many women leaders governed Indians like Sultana Raziya, Rani of Jhansi, Sarojini Naidu, the iron lady of India Indira Gandhi etc. But , the important of women empowerment become very necessary in this fastest modernization era especially in developing and under developed countries. Because they can not build a developed country without the development of women community.

One of the important thing can be do for women empowerment is to educate them, and giving awareness about their right especially in rural women. The parents have the prime duty, that is to educate children. If any exception occurred the government should take immense and suitable action to educate them. Education is the greatest and primary way to empower women society.

Another way is that. Participate women participants or representatives in social economical, political field. Such kind of freedom to women section will lead them to achieve overall growth and development of women community. Reservation for women including Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assembly, and other government posts etc. implemented by the government of India is a good step to improve women quality. But it should work properly. For this education is also very essential.

Since the dependent women are considered as not empowered, they should in need of freedom. Then only they will improve and by the country also.

## CONCLUSION

Women empowerment is one of the big issue facing by India like other challenges poverty, unemployment, energy crisis etc. Indian women community is a big women section. So, they should developed. Then only India can achieve and enjoy the honey of development.

Now, Indian women society is developing with the overall development of India. The latest census reported the women literacy rate is around 55%, at the same time it was in below 10% in 1951 census. It is a great achievement. But we are facing many challenges. So, the government of India should take strategic steps in women empowerment. Then only India can be a developed nation.

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