

Women Empowerment: Role of Government and Non Government Agencies

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Abstract: *Women empowerment focuses on four pillars that are known as social empowerment, Political participation, educational empowerment and physiological relaxation. Government and NGOs Plays a very vital role for women empowerment with their, effective collaboration and mutual cooperation for proper result oriented implementation of its policies, schemes, plan and programme for women empowerment during ancient time women faced the era of darkness of cultural domination, financial domination with backwardness, lack of learning and knowledge backwardness, caste based domination lead to inequality, female infanticide, sexual harassment, physically torture, mentally torture, Purdah System, forced to women burn alive on their death husband's funeral, mental harassment, male domination, unequal pay or wages, discrimination based on gender, orthodox stereotypes norms, prejudgment approach towards women etc. created a hindrances from past to present scenario of 21st century, India emphasized to be on Atma Nirbhar Bharat, it could be possible when possible when 50 percent of women population constituted in our country get equal opportunities, equal legal protection, Equalitarian society, social mobilization that lead to Liberalization, globalization and transformation of the hour with holistic, growth and development of the human being with effective implementation of the Government and NGOs policies, schemes, programme for women empowerment with versatile of approaches in multi-dimensional perspective.*

Keywords: *Women empowerment*

I. INTRODUCTION

The female population makes for almost half of the world's population. It is of utmost importance that women also enjoy equal opportunities in all walks of life and have true freedom to make their own choices and decisions. Women are known to have made extraordinary contribution in making the world as we see it today, be it Mother Teresa, Marie Curie, Betty William, Virginia Woolf, and many others, who fought for their rights and stood up for their beliefs against all odds, or Kalpana Chawla, Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal, Indra Nooyi etc. who broke down all the barriers in their paths to become successful and influential women. Despite all this, there are still women who get so caught up in their domestic lives that they forget about themselves and their dreams.

Be it cultural inhibitions, lack of financial support, lack of opportunities, gender based discrimination or personal responsibilities, women often give up on themselves, their passions, dreams and aspirations. Women empowerment in society facilitates to bring equality for both genders and helps women by providing them strength and courage to become the decision maker of their own lives. Women empowerment in India has gained strength with the help of organizations working for the welfare of women by providing them with all the needed support.

Women empowerment is a major social issue talked about in today's world. Since independence, especially after 1990, India has been working towards empowering women. Women empowerment implies the ability in women to take decisions with regard to their life and work and giving equal rights to them in all spheres like personal, social, economic, political, legal, and so on. Women today are getting empowered to take the decision of their life. They are deciding their own career and are realizing their potential. Today women are working shoulder to shoulder with men.

Women are excelling in various fields and getting numerous chances to shape their dream life. The government has also taken a lot of initiatives to empower women of the country.

Indian society consists of people belonging to almost all kinds of religious beliefs. In every religion women are given a special place and every religion teaches us to treat women with respect and dignity. But somehow the society has so developed that various types of ill practices, both physical and mental, against women have become a norm since ages. For instance, sati pratha, practice of dowry, parda pratha, female infanticide, wife burning, sexual violence, sexual harassment at work place, domestic violence and other varied kinds of discriminatory practices; all such acts consist of physical as well as mental element.

Non- governmental organizations (NGOs) can be defined as, “legally constituted corporations created by natural or legal people that operate independently from any form of government. The term originated from the United Nations and normally refers to the organizations that are not a part of the government and are not conventional for profit businesses. In the cases in which NGOs are totally or partially funded by the governments, the NGO maintains its non-governmental status by excluding government representatives from membership in the organization.” The NGOs are essentially heterogeneous, each having its own realm of operation. Their field of work may vary from taking care of street animals to providing care and rehabilitation of rescued human trafficking victims. Some of the prominent fields of operation are children, disabled persons’ education, taking care of the elderly, employment, environment, health, human rights and women.

On July 2, 2010 the General Assembly voted unanimously to create a dynamic new entity called UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The new entity brings together four United Nations offices focusing on gender equality; UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW). UN Women became operational in January 2011.

PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIA’S WOMEN

There are innumerable challenges that India poses in creating equal rights for women economically, socially and politically. The problems faced by Indian women are centuries old. Problems faced by Indian women are:

Gender-Based Inequality

Women are first the property of their fathers, then of their brothers and then ultimately of their husbands. This idea has led to males feeling superior. India is highly patriarchal society; this is one of the many social standards that need to be addressed in order to better the lives of women in India.

Female Illiteracy and Education

Female illiteracy is one of the major problems in India. These low literacy rates are another indicators of the differential treatment of women in India. The dropout rate was high among girls and SC, ST children. The Indian Government has made major movement in order to eradicate the illiteracy problem in the country. The government has passed the Right to Education Act that mandates free and compulsory education to children between 6 and 14 years of age. This gives parents an immediate incentive to send them to school.

Female Feticide and Female Infanticide

Female feticide is one of the evil ways of discrimination against women in a society where a woman is denied her most basic fundamental right i.e. “The right to life”. Many people determine the sex of the feticide and if they find that it is a girl inside the womb. They are killed then and there. Women are not even safe in the safest place on the earth.

Women Security

It is one of the major issues in India. As every day, we hear one or more cases of rape, violence against women, sex trafficking, dowry deaths in the country. No age group of the woman is safe in the world. They are unsafe everywhere. This is one of the major reasons for all problems faced by the women.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES BY GOVT. OF INDIA

The Indian Government has launched series of schemes and programmes which cover welfare and support services, gender sensitization and awareness generation. These efforts are directed to make women socially and economically empowered so that they can take equal and active part in national development along with men.

Social Initiatives

The various initiatives by the government are as follows:

- National Mission for Empowerment of Women
- Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls.
- Ujjawala Yojna
- Nirbhaya Fund
- Beti Bachao - Beti Padhao Yojna
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Women Safety Apps.

Economic Initiatives

The various economic initiatives by the government are as follows:

- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
- Swayamsiddha
- Gender Budgeting
- Bharatiya Mahila Bank
- Sukanya Samridhi Yojana

Health Sector Initiatives

The various health sector initiatives by government are as follows:

- Janani Suraksha Yojana
- Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana
- National Food Security Act 2013

Women Self Help Group

A Self Help Group is a group of some women, who come together to address their common issue. They are encouraged to make voluntary thrift on a daily basis. For example, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) started by civil right. It also has other bodies like SEWA Bank, SEWA Mahila Trust, SEWA Housing, etc to assist women.

CONSTITUTION OF INDIA AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

India's Constitution makers and our founding fathers were very determined to provide equal rights to both women and men. The Constitution of India is one of the finest equality documents in the world. It provides provisions to secure equality in general and gender equality in particular. Various articles in the Constitution safeguard women's rights by putting them at par with men socially, politically and economically. The Preamble, the Fundamental Rights, DPSPs and other constitutional provisions provide several general and special safeguards to secure women's human rights.

- **Preamble:** The Preamble to the Constitution of India assures justice, social, economic and political; equality of status and opportunity and dignity to the individual. Thus it treats both men and women equal.
- **Fundamental Right's:** The policy of women empowerment is well entrenched in the Fundamental Rights enshrined in our Constitution. For instance:
Article 14 ensures to women the right to equality.
Article 15(1) specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
Article 15(3) empowers the State to take affirmative action's in favor of women.

Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office.

These rights being fundamental rights are justifiable in court and the Government is obliged to follow the same.

- **Directive Principles of State Policy:** Directive principles of State Policy also contains important provisions regarding women empowerment and it is the duty of the government to apply these principles while making laws or formulating any policy. Though these are not justifiable in the Court but these are essential for governance nonetheless. Some of them are:

Article 39 (a) provides that the State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

Article 39 (d) mandates equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

Article 42 provides that the State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

- **Fundamental Duties:** Fundamental duties are enshrined in Part IV-A of the Constitution and are positive duties for the people of India to follow. It also contains a duty related to women's rights:

Article 51 (A) (e) expects from the citizen of the country to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

- **Other Constitutional Provisions:** Through **73rd** and **74th** Constitutional Amendment of 1993, a very important political right has been given to women which are a landmark in the direction of women empowerment in India. With this amendment women were given 33.33 percent reservation in seats at different levels of elections in local governance i.e. at Panchayat, Block and Municipality elections.

Thus it can be seen that these Constitutional provisions are very empowering for women and the State is duty bound to apply these principles in taking policy decisions as well as in enacting laws.

SPECIFIC LAWS FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

Here is the list of some specific laws which were enacted by the Parliament in order to fulfill Constitutional obligation of women empowerment:

- The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.
- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.
- The Medical termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.
- The Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Protection and) Act, 2013.

Above mentioned and several other laws are there which not only provide specific legal rights to women but also gives them a sense of security and empowerment.

Non Profit Organizations/ Non Governmental Organizations are part of social development and welfare of the state people. NGOs have been actively working for genuine social development programmes and welfare activities of urban and rural communities. The NGOs are participating in Social development and charitable issues organized by Government and welfare groups. It is a well known fact that Indians people are also very helpful for social welfare matters, charitable Purposes and support. They are always ready to come ahead to work for the upliftment and betterment of the children, women Development, Education, Social awareness and other objectives.

Non Governmental Organizations are functioning for Child Education, Child Welfare, Child Rights, Women Development, Women Empowerment, Old age Homes for Old Age persons, physically and mentally handicap persons, and Upliftment of slum Children and Women. NGOs are well organizing Education, Health, Social Justice, Disaster Management, Natural Resource Management, Agriculture Development, Social Awareness, Betterment of Backward

and Deprived Communities, Poverty and Distress Relief programmes. NGO has been implementing the programmes related to Employment, female feticides, Rain Water Harvesting, Animal Welfare, Science and Technology, Sports, Development of Art, Craft and Culture, Heritage Protection, Conservation of Historical Places The issues like conservation and Protection of environment, Human Rights, Social Equality, Drinking Water issues, Legal Awareness and Aid, Nutrition, Right to Information, Rural and Urban Development, forming and supporting Self Help Groups, Research and Development are main part of the major active NGOs in Gujarat. Are functioning for Child Education, Child Welfare, Child Rights, Women Development, Women Empowerment, Old age Homes for Old Age persons, physically and mentally handicap persons, and Upliftment of slum Children and Women? NGOs are well organizing Education, Health, Social Justice, Disaster Management, Natural Resource Management, Agriculture Development, Social Awareness, Betterment of Backward and Deprived Communities, Poverty and Distress Relief programmes.

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Top Ten NGOs in India

- **SAMMAAN FOUNDATION:** Originally established to link the poor to the mainstream through education, training and financial support, the current project of this NGO involves the rickshaw pullers to help them earn a better livelihood. This NGO also has notable contribution in areas like children education, health services and welfare of women.
- **GOONJ:** A recipient of the “NGO of the Year” award in 2007 at the India NGO Awards, this NGO aims at solving the clothing problems of the downtrodden. Goonj also provides relief during Rahat floods in West Bengal, Assam and Bihar.
- **AKSHAYA TRUST:** The sole aim of this NGO is to restore human dignity. Operating in Madurai, this NGO offers rehabilitation, healthy food and care to the street destitute.
- **SMILE FOUNDATION:** The main aim of this NGO is the rehabilitation of the underprivileged by providing them education and healthcare services, thereby converting them into productive assets. It is run by a group of corporate professionals.
- **UDAAN WELFARE FOUNDATION:** The main aim of this NGO is to help the destitute, the main area of stress being women, children and senior citizens and also environmental welfare. One of their main projects is a cancer chemotherapy center.
- **PRATHAM:** The main aim of this NGO is to provide education to the children living in the huge slums of Mumbai and even providing education to those people who are unable to go to school. Their projects have increased enrollment of children in schools thus promising them a better tomorrow.
- **LEPRA SOCIETY:** This NGO aims at prevention and control of diseases like AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis in poor communities.
- **DEEPALAYA:** This NGO aims at providing education to the children living in the slums of Delhi. Their projects also include providing healthcare, education, vocational training to the downtrodden and the physically disabled. They have contributed towards significant rural development in Haryana and Uttarakhand.
- **UDAY FOUNDATION:** This NGO provides support to the parents and families of children suffering from congenital disorders and other syndromes. Their projects also include research to open new horizons of healthcare technologies. They also have health projects for common people. Their special stress is in the area of protecting child rights.
- **HELPAGE INDIA:** Established in 1978, the sole aim of this NGO is to provide resources to the elderly people of our country. Their objective is to make aware the senior citizens of their rights and protect the rights of the senior citizens of our country so that they can also play a key role in our society. They also work with

the government (both local and national) to implement policies that will be beneficial to the senior citizens of our country.

A famous Indian NGO, Chintan was the first in India to receive the US Innovation Award for Empowerment of Women and Girls, for its outstanding contribution in this field. The award was received by Chintan's founder Bharati Chaturvedi from the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. A further aid of USD 5,00,000 was announced by the US Secretary of State to facilitate Chintan's endeavor to continue its noble efforts. The Award is funded by the Rockefeller Foundation "through the Secretary's International fund for Women and Girls".

India was estimated to have had around 3.3 million operational NGOs in 2009. The figure has no doubt increased in 2013. The best part about Indian NGOs is that they don't blow their own trumpets and do their work seriously and sincerely. They contribute more than their fair shares for the upliftment of the society and enrichment of the lives of hapless and downtrodden people of India. Without their contribution, it would have come as no surprise if the picture of India was as grim as those of sub-Saharan countries

Women Empowerment through NGOs -

In India around 3-3 million NGOs are registered in the year 2009 by the central statistical institute of India. 3071 NGOs. Several NGOs are working for women empowerment in over country with multi-task, multi-vision, multi-disciplinary approach for growth and development of the women. NGOs like pad organization for good hygienic health during menstruation several trust like Ammada Trust, Sachi Saheli, Goonj etc are working for health hygienic of girls and women mahila vikas, Ekta Mahila, Guria India, The landscape of women's rights NGOs, SEWA, Annapura Pariwar, Snehaloya, Action aid for women, North East Network (NEN), Sahyog Mahila Mandal, Jivanam Asteya, Soka Ikeda College of Arts and Science for women, Azad Foundation, Mujlismanch, Help age India, CREA, Child Rights and you (CRY), Sanaan foundation center for social research, sayodhya home for women in need, Deepaloya, Goonj, Pratham, The Prajnya Trust, Prerana, udaar welfare foundation, Janodaya, vimochana, Makan, SMILE foundation, Swaniti, Sakhya women's guidance cell, Jogori, Swayam, sayfly, asara, Bharatiya Grameen mahila sangh, The ammoda Trust, Aakar Innovations etc are the NGOs working towards women's holistic all round development and growth.

NGOs are non-voluntary organization working in several fields –

NGOs are working in the spectrum of multi-task, multi-vision, multi-approach, multi-disciplinary spirit to provide healthy society based on quality education, medical health facilities, legal aids, school, vocational training, awareness programme, economic based activities for women through self help group etc for women development.

Suggestions for NGO'S

- NGOs enhance their impact of growth and development on women empowerment through setup several workshop that guide innovation ideas and right directions of vocational training, skill enhancement training, innovative ideas, practical learning to generate economic activities to make economically self-reliant.
- NGOs should use old documents and work hard to improve their field areas through various research works.
- NGOs should developed activity master plan to identify the strengthen of the local people with their proper cooperation and collaboration.
- NGOs should keep a check at rural areas with their specific community on specific mission to enhance poor people.
- NGOs should emphasize on the marginalized group of the village or urban area to mobilize the poor population by self building capacity.
- NGOs should collaborate effectively with the Government and the area of local region to enhance participatory vision among the people the lead them towards the path of the development.
- NGOs should channelized the local people with the establishment of local communities, keeping a check on government services get effective implemented for the welfare of the community and suitable, relevant delivery of the effective assistance provided the government.

- NGOs should take feedback from the local community and acknowledge them about true picture about it.
- NGOs should development systematic, authentic, master plan strategies that could help maximum poor community with rennet oriented approach.

Suggestions for Government

- The scheme and programme launched by the government of India still need more expanded sphere to maximize their beneficiary approach to the holistic community.
- Government need to launch awareness programme, education camp programme for adolescent girls to attend schools regularly.
- Government motivate to the rural women involve in the politics at the gross root level.
- Government scheme and programme for women should be analyse properly before it implementation because of very sensitive issues.
- Government fixed particular time or period for women's programme and schemes to be attend and benefit maximum beneficiaries.
- Government launched so many schemes but still failure and success about it is not clear.
- Proper implementation and administration is the key to success for governments programme for women's.
- Government and NGOs collaboration and supportive ideology based on clear vision to attend maximum implementations of policies, schemes and programme.
- Direct representative of the state government at the district level is District Collectorate. It focus on the plan of action, schemes, Programme of the Government are put into activity. Areas of women related schemes should be more authentic with result oriented vision.

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