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Women empowerment and development

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Abstract

The state requires effective role to run the government for its development as a catalysts, contemplating the activities of individuals and private businesses. But often time it fails to deliver the goods and services to the people. This paper takes into account the study that lawlessness often lead to marginalisation in a very humble approach and try to point out some weaknesses on the part of the government in the hands of the affluent having more political clout than the other groups. It humbly attempt to highlights some few points to tackle the various problems where a collective partnership and community's participation could prove effective in handling the situation.

Keywords: Women empowerment, self-independent, women reservation, feminism, Manipur

Introductions

It is nevertheless a known fact that the low developmental infrastructure is in fact one leading factor of under-development. Thanks to Simon de Beavoire who open a pathway to boost women studies in 1947. Women empowerment and development has a great role of linking one another. It is also generally agreed that education is the core developmental factor and plays a crucial role in empowering women. In the early phase of developmental planning, the concept of women development was mainly welfare-oriented. During the sixties, education and maternal and child health receive priority. During the seventies, there was a shift from welfare to development which started recognising women as participants of development. Having recognised the role and contribution of women in development in the nineties, training for employment-cum- income generating programmes were adopted. With the objective of making them economically independent and self- reliant due importance was concentrated on women. Women empowerment would mean equipping them economically to be self- independent, self- reliant and have self-confidence to be able to face any difficult situation regardless of gender inequality. Women should be able to participate in any process of decision making and any other administrative units. Mahatma Gnadhi once said, "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country. Women will enjoy equal rights as men. This is India my dreams".

The year 2001 had been declared by the govt. of India as the year of women empowerment. The topic of women empowerment had been in the agenda of discussion by many developed and developing countries for the last many years. For which various changes in the policies of the govt. have been taken place. One distinct example can be the 33% of reservation seat for women in the panchayat administration that has been effectively implemented. Another bill for 33% reservation for women in the parliament and assembly has been put up though it has not been practically implemented at large. The constitution of India provides equal rights for men and women. But unfortunately, women all over the world are being subjugated and suppressed at various degrees irrespective of caste, creed, class and race. The recent rape cases in the capital city of India on North East Women and a molestation case of two women by a gang of gundas on the suburb of Mumbai. And a mass molestation case on the rural women in the remote hill areas of Churachandpur, Manipur are ample proof of such discrimination against women on regular basis.

Without mincing any biases, the objective of this paper is to have some critical evaluation on women's empowerment so that, women who contributes a major share in any developmental infrastructure of the country could independently exercise their own rights in their endeavour for economic, social, and political development.

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Need for Women Empowerment

Women in India have always been discriminated against men in human resources development with utter disregard to their actual potential contribution to national development in general. Whereas Swami Vivekananda has said- ‘‘A nation would not march forward if the women are left behind’’. Against the ideologies of Swami Vivekananda, women still lack rights to inherit property, right to own land, right to get education. According to NSSO survey report 2001 census, the total literacy rate of women constitutes 54.18% as against 75.85% of male. Out of the total population of 1,025.25 million, women population constitutes 48.26% out of which 25.67% constitutes the women working force in the country against 51.93% of men work force this clearly indicates that half of the country’s production are being contributed by the women working force. But still women are under estimated as weaker sex.

Development cannot be brought with half of the world’s population deprived of all the good things and necessities due to their suppression. With the emergence of various movements of women in various parts of the world advocating women’s rights in all spheres and equality with men, women have asserted for her proper space in the family, society and politics. In order to attain these goals and equality, empowerment of women is highly essential.

Women empowerment on various developmental approaches: According to the human development Report 2005, published by UNDP, it envisaged that fighting and poverty and promoting development are truly sustainable way to achieve world peace. There will be no peace without development and there will be no neither peace nor development without social justice. The ratio of poverty in India is 40.04% in rural areas and 7.47% in urban areas. This clearly indicates that majority of the population in India still resides in rural areas depending on agriculture. Women played a major role in agriculture and other sectors specially in the rural economy like India. Rural women are not projected well in the developmental policies all over the countries. This calls for a new revolution.

Educational empowerment of women is the key which opens the door of life, develops humanity and promotes national development and it also serves as cornerstone for social development. Countries committed to universal primary education for boys and girls have been far more successful in escaping poverty and recording higher rate of growth and socio-economic development. Education would help in empowering women to build a positive self-image and boost self confidence among themselves and develop their ability to think critically. More importantly education of rural women should be given utmost importance.

It has been increasingly realised that nothing is more central to sustainable development than the economic, political and social participation and empowerment of women education as a means has profound impact on development. Among various reasons, poverty is one prime factor for lack of education especially in rural areas. Education would uphold the women to endow with confident to control her life and established her dreams and enhance her status. However, the percentage of educated girls is still very low. For this we need some educational transformation even in the school curriculum. The literacy of female in India in 2001 is 54.16% as against 75.85% of males. Women will gain power when both men and women respect each other and accept the contribution of women. One major reason for

drop out of female education leading to low rate is due to preference of male than female, traditional beliefs of patriarchal system, financial constraint etc. Educating the girls is seen as a waste of resources as she would be married off soon to another household. This kind of gender discrimination on superstition and traditional beliefs need to be replaced by modern feminist outlook and ideas., having equal status. The importance of education for empowerment of women is undeniable. However, India has the lowest literacy in Asia. In 1991, it is found that that over 200 million illiterate women are there. This has a negative impact on the Nations development and prosperity.

Women empowerment cannot be ignored where economic progress is concerned in both developed and developing countries. Due to traditional customs the status of women is always lower than male. These institutional bases of development have to be changed by accepting gender equality and changing the women’s perception of themselves as weaker sex.

In order to enhance the contribution of women in agricultural development, empowering women with economically productive works is necessary such as land, ownership, assets will enhance their responsibility in decision making unit with self-confidence. Unfortunately, the rate of o women taking part in any administrative body is extremely low. These needs some radical changes. Organising women groups for integrating farm women into development should be given due effect. Mahilla Mandals, Co-operative societies, various self-help groups are some of the examples. Constructive organisational et ups should be strongly encouraged.

Capacity building and empowerment are also important for any development of the Nations. Instead, of age-old tools and method, new technological inventions should be imparted to the rural women for quick development. Empowering women with modern technology and equipments is essential for promoting agricultural productivity. But it is heartening to find that many recent developmental schemes and projects taken up do not reach the rural areas at large. This should be corrected at any cost.

Conclusion

Women empowerment is the main objective of all developmental programmes and policies. Women are an important segment from the local level to the global levels. Education and competence, willingness, self- confidence and self-motivation would largely contribute to empowerment of rural women. For these purposes, govts, should encourage research on various programmes and projects with adequate women representation experts in the case related to women developmental planning. Free and compulsory education should be given to all the women in the rural areas from the primary level till secondary levels. Other measures for strengthening women empowerment could be establishments of supervisory bodies to monitor the implementations of various provisions related to women. To formulate all these measures and steps taken by the government into actions, further research on war footing is necessary at various levels. Setting up various women studies centres and enabling them to undergo various research and training programmes is highly essential. Real empowerment of women cannot be translated into reality if all these are deprived. Effective planning with clear cut

knowledge at the micro level can be one direct method to asserts the ground reality.

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