

## **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

Dr. S. SHANTHI

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu  
[Deputed to Periyar Government Arts College, Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu]

### **ABSTRACT**

The Empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21<sup>st</sup> century not only at national level but also at the international level. Besides, the society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self-decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality. To ensure women economic empowerment, education for women has to be paid special attention. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. Women ought to be permitted to work and ought to be sufficiently given wellbeing and backing to work. They should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society. Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.

**Keywords:** Wage, Income, Rights, Empowerment

### **INTRODUCTION**

Women empowerment refers to complete emancipation of women from socio-economic shackles of dependency and deprivations. Women empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what they can do and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education raising awareness. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life determining decisions in society. In the simplest words, empowering the women means creating such as environment in which they can take independent decision for their personal development and the development of society in general. Empowerment is the process by which the women achieve increased control and participation in decision making which in turn helps to achieve equal basis with men in various spheres such as political, economic, social cultural and civil.

Empowerment of women is a necessity for the very development of a society, since it enhances both the quality and the quantity of human resources available for development. Economic empowerment results in women's ability to influence in make a right decision. Without gender equality and empowerment, the country could not be just and social change would not occur. Therefore, women's empowerment plays a huge role in development and is one of the significant contributions of development.

### **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Economic empowerment implies a better quality of material life for a sustainable livelihood owned and managed by women. There is a strong correlation between economic development and women's legal rights. Women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home.

But, they also remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Gender discrimination means women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs, and constitute a small minority of those in senior positions. It curtails access to economic assets such as land and loans. It limits participation in shaping economic and social policies. And, because women perform the bulk of household work, they often have little time left to pursue economic opportunities.

### **ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

India is the world's largest democracy and fastest growing economy, home to 1.2 billion people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and cultures. The country has made good advancements on poverty reduction, education and health, but progress still needs to be made in reducing inequality and hunger, improving maternal mortality rates and enabling greater access to water and sanitation for the large majority of its people.

Women's participation in the labour force is quite low, and has been falling over the last few years. The female to male ratio is only 0.36. This is exacerbated by lack of choices that women have to engage in paid work related to work type and location, patriarchal gender norms, and the undue burdens of unpaid care work that women bear.

Across India there are massive social cleavages and gender inequality is prevalent in sectors including health, education, and literacy. There are several national and international NGOs and civil society actors working towards enhancing women's rights, but the proportion of those specifically targeting women is low. The policy space available to organisations working for women's empowerment is quite restricted, however, research and advocacy on women's rights

and work is on the rise, in addition to several government programmes to enhance empowerment of women.

Globalization, Liberalization and other Socio - Economic forces have given some respite to a large proportion of the population. However, there are still quite a few areas where women empowerment in India is largely lacking. Poverty and illiteracy add to these complications. The Empowerment of Women begins with a guarantee of their health and safety. There are a few Government projects and NGOs in the Country, there is still a wide crevice that exists between those under security and those not. Poverty and lack of education add to these confusions.

The Empowerment of Women starts with an insurance of their well-being and security. In request to make a maintainable world, the country should start to empower women. Empowerment of women could only be achieved if their economic and social status is improved. This could be possible only by adopting definite social and economic policies with a view of total development of women and to make them realize that they have the potential to be strong human beings.

### **GOVERNMENT SCHEMES**

The Government programmes for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, the Government of India has over 34 schemes for women operated by different Department and Ministries. The efforts of Government and its different agencies are ably supplemented by nongovernmental organizations that are playing an equally important role in facilitating women empowerment. Despite concerted efforts of governments and NGOs there are certain gaps.

### **CONCLUSION**

The attainment in the field of income / employment and in educational front, the scenario of women economic empowerment seems to be comparatively poor. The need of the hour is to identify those loopholes or limitations which are observing the realization of empowerment of women and this initiative must be started from the women folk itself as well as more importantly policy initiative taken by the state and society. In an egalitarian society, everybody men or women get the equal opportunity to express and uplift one's well-being and well-being of the society as whole. Government activities alone would not be adequate to accomplish this objective. Society must step up with regards to make an atmosphere in which there is no sexual orientation segregation and women have full chances of self-basic leadership and taking part in social, political and financial existence of the nation with a feeling of equity

Women economic empowerment will be real and effective only when they are endowed income and property so that they may stand on their feet and build up their identity in the society. The

Empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21<sup>st</sup> century not only at national level but also at the international level. Besides, the society must take initiative to create a climate in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self-decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country with a sense of equality.

### **POLICY SUGGESTIONS**

The first and foremost priority should be given to the education of women, which is the grassroots problem. Hence, education for women has to be paid special attention. Women should be allowed to work and should be provided enough safety and support to work. Women ought to be permitted to work and ought to be sufficiently given wellbeing and backing to work. They should be provided with proper wages and work at par with men so that their status can be elevated in the society. Awareness programmes need to be organized for creating awareness among women especially belonging to weaker sections about their rights.

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