

Women's development problems and prospects

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Abstract: *Women, one of the Nations, are still in social in social bondage and have suffered greatly in human history. They suffered lack of social liberty, child marriages, polygamy enforced widowhood and want of education. . They do arduous work as wage earners, casual labour in paid and unpaid family labour. a large number of women workers and agricultural labourers suffer from various problem. Female infanticide a higher mortality rate, higher morbidity rate, lower literacy rate levels, lower levels of employment adverse sex ratio. The girl child is discriminated against from birth, and indeed oven before birth. For true equality to become we a reality for women, the sharing of power on equal terms with men must be a major strategy. To promote their interests effectively women must be able to enjoy their right to take part in national and international decision making process. The increased participation of women and the development s of societies in the areas of health, education family care, social welfare, the environment etc. By contrast countries with low participation women have seen a fall in the quality if social related services.*

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I. Introduction

The world is heading fast towards 21st century. The challenges are multi-dimensional which have to be faced untidily by all of us. But if we look around we find a reverse trend. It is visualized that in these efforts to re-model the society and to establish peace on a permanent basis, the women ought to play a prominent role. Endowed with certain inherent qualities, like patience, love and affection and sense of the sacrifice, the presence of women should create a better environment wherever she is inducted in the organization. The development of women is essential not merely for the benefit of a women folk but for the very survival of the society for the progress of peace and prosperity of the world

In male dominated society women's development has not been focused from angle. It has been generally considered as the development of a section of society which is cooperatively weak. But there is an urgent need to change the focus, unless the world organizations realize this bitter truth and change their strategies, not much success is expected from the various steps taken towards the development of women. Women's development is no exception. If we make an analysis of the existing status, rules and regulations, it is found that they are sufficient to boast the development of women. But the tragedy is that they are not properly implemented and the women's development suffers. Hence it is suggested that instead of concentrating on new legislation, efforts should be made to implement the existing ones effectively.

Women are vital and productive workers in India's national economy. Development is human centered process; people are both the ends and the means in this process. Human resource

development applies equally to both women and men. Women play an equal role even in the sustainability of development through world. But the fruits of the development are distributed unequally among males and females.

II. Women As Agriculture Workers

Women labour in the informal sector is an important segment of the labor force they constitute one third of the world's labour force. They do arduous work as wage earners, casual labour in paid and unpaid family labor. But the economic and social status of the women workers is dismal. Although there is no obvious discrimination against the women a worker in the plans and programs, at the implementation stage various socio-economic forces have operated against them. Moreover, the fast pace of India's economy has thrown up many social, economic and human problems. None of these is as acute as that of informal women workers in rural areas in the country. Involved in an unbelievable variety and multiplicity of activities, millions of poor Indian women live and work below the poverty line, with the sole purpose of providing the survival needs of their families. Being illiterate, unskilled and poor they are forced work under harsh and deplorable working conditions. The problem is more acute in the case of women agriculture workers. The major problem that affects them springs from the unorganized nature of industry in this sector. They are outside the reach of most laws and governmental schemes that seek to protect the security and improve the working conditions of labourers in India. Labour organizations are mostly absent. Where they do exist they are all still in a formative stage, and have had a little impact on women workers in agricultural workers working in bonded state have been reported from all parts of the country, except in Kerala where agricultural labor is well organized. Virtually now here are they paid wages equal to men often they are being paid less than the minimum wages fixed by the government. No fixed hours of the work and no social security is provided to them. Despite the existence of various constitutional provisions to safe guard the interest of women workers, a large number of women workers and agricultural labourers suffer from various problems. The package of various labor laws has not benefited them in many crucial areas specially wages health, maternity, and social security. Government institutions and the enforcement machinery have failed to provide them protection against discrimination and oppression. Lacking awareness of political, legal and natural rights.

Practically all women agricultural workers are drawn from the agricultural labor households. The proportion was high as 97%. They are landless. A substation proposition of the agricultural labourers belong to the socially economically backward castes, they account for one third of the agricultural worker. Literacy is very low, if not altogether nonexistent, among the agricultural workers, but its absence is particularly marked among the women 95% of whom were classified as illiterate. The incidence of unemployment is almost twice as for female agricultural labours. Some of the problems faced by women agricultural workers include denial of minimum wages and equal wages, unemployment and under development, long and harsh working conditions, discriminations, sexual harassment, illiteracy poverty, no proper organization and exploitation by middle men in most states minimum wages for fixed for men and women. Women's was considered as light and men's work was considered as heavy. The peak season, women have more work and more wages share as in slack season they have less work and less wages. Most of the women workers constantly trying to find other sources of income to tide them over the off season. Many of them take up work road construction, uppara pani, vegetable vending, etc.

III. Women And Employment: The Issue Of Family:

Family means different things to different people. It may mean security, resources, shelter and a lifelong security for food and clothing; it is in the family that women's work becomes based on

sexual division of labor, and hence functional and unpaid. Women do 2/3 of all the world's work. In exchange they receive 10% of all income and own a mere 1% of all the world means of production. These figures clearly point out how the ideology of the family where women are seen primarily as mother and house wives and secondary as workers affects women's material situation also, justifying a discriminatory wage structure, an equal access to technology, information and training and double burden of work.

The family ideology plays a very crucial role in the social construction of gender, which presents women's subordination as being natural. The entire process of the girl child in the family, leads her to interline the concept of dependence, which is crimping to any notion of employment. Today the activities of the house wife are diverse, varying from region to region. It is not house work per se but the inferior status that it bestows which has to be questioned. The invisibility of women work which is not recognized as economically productive work is further extended into the various forms of subsistence production with which women are involved. There is a separation between male commodity production, where men produce cash crops and women for the immediate production, of the family. Women who are primarily seen as mothers and house wives are forced to make themselves available as cheap wage labour –power, both in the factory and at home, since their work is only of a secondary nature. This is only a matter of ideology because women as mothers are reliant on cash income. This suits the capitalist ideology, where money is the measure of everything and the female labor power can be paid the least or need not be paid at all for bulk of their work. The house wife is not free or equal. She does not have their right to choose or change the type of her job. She has no choice and is bound to her work house, her husband and her children. She is isolated and atomized. There is no social security for her on the basis of her work.

IV. Women's Health And Effects On Society

The consequences of this inferior status takes different forms namely female feticides, female infanticide, a higher mortality rate, higher morbidity rate, lower literacy rate levels, lower levels of employment and adverse sex ratio. The girl child is discriminated against from birth, and indeed even before birth. Women's health needs remain unmet. It is often expressed how can few iron pills treat the anaemia of women denied of adequate food and nutrition all her due to cultural prospects. In the processes of women's development, the phases of infancy, preschool and school, adolescence and out should be taken care of without showing any discrimination against the female component of human population women should be allowed to get a due share for their growth and development in all spheres of life. It is most often said that today's child is tomorrow's citizen and she should live long without succumbing to infant and child mortality so as to eventually enter the labor force and add to the human resource development of the nation.

Women in general and pregnant women in particular have special nutrition needs. They need 3 times more iron than men to replace iron lost during menstrual bleeding. Pregnant and breast feeding women need 20 times more. Pregnancy also demands an extra 150 calories per day in the first three months, an extra 350 calories/day in the next 550 calories. Women need sufficient calcium also especially during childhood, pregnancy and after menopause. Insufficient calcium in a girl child can lead to poor development of pelvic bones resulting in difficult child birth due to obstructed labour, in later years, it can lead to frequent broken bones and osteoporosis. Women require more iodine for their own health and that of their children. Insufficient iodine especially in an already deficient mother, can result in poor fetal brain development which leads to the birth of mentally sub-normal children, children with speech defects and defects in coordination and movements. Once a girl child born, the cycle of under-nutrition begins. The female infant receives less breast milk and is fed at longer intervals than boys and girls along with their

mothers eat last, and hence eat the least, in adequate nutrition stunts adolescents' growth in females, resulting in poorly developed bones and muscles and low body weight and height. Under nutrition does not merely make a person tired and weak but predisposes one to innumerable infections, worsening on already fatigued state.

V. Political Participation And Share Of Women In Political Power

For true equality to become a reality for women, the sharing of power on equal terms with men must be a major strategy. To promote their interests effectively women must be able to enjoy their right to take part in national and international decision making process. Efforts are being made to narrow down the gaps between men and women in every field. Appreciable progress has been achieved in many fields but in the field of politics, the participation of women still remains very low. Though as voters they constitute a significant number, but their representation in various political bodies is disproportionate to their strength. To many women, politics is a vague expression meaning the government of the country, which has traditionally been the business man. As such women participate to a lesser degree than men in all political activities. To make an assessment of women's participation in politics is a difficult task due to lack of statistics and information on the subject. Women in general do not have much interest in politics. This is supported by studies made by psychologists on women's attitude and behavior. The decline the moral value, the increasing use of money to achieve political power and the civilization of politics are some of the factors which do not encourage women to take an active part in politics. Further party attitudes are also responsible for this state of affairs. Generally political parties do not favor nomination of women candidates as they are not sure of their success. More over political parties generally select their candidates from fields like law and journalism where the percentage of women is comparatively low. Today party tickets are given on various considerations such as religion, caste and money. Politics is a game of power which depends on right calculations and while nominating candidates political parties do not find women as successful pawns in the game of politics. In the decision making process at the party level, women are generally kept at a distance. This results in their lack of representation at the lower levels. There is no doubt that an all out effort is being made to enhance the status of women in India. But status is related to the exercise of power, both political and administrative. And unless women are able to exercise this power in large numbers, their status in society will not change significantly.

VI. Conclusion

Women constitute almost half of the total population in India but they are not enjoying their freedoms, equalities, privileges, on par with their male counterparts. Since implementation of planning in India, several policies and approaches were made to reduce inequalities between women and men. As a result a shift from 'welfare' to 'development' to 'empowerment' to 'human development' approaches has taken place to change the position and status of women. Both government and NGO's sectors were intervening to empower the women. Most of the women they have shown significant impact on all segments of the economy in India. Generally the areas chosen by women are retail trade, restaurants, hotels, education, cultural, insurance and manufacturing. Majority of the women have under taken fields like Beauty Parlours, Fancy Stores, Hardware / Electrical, Readymade / cloths, Food processing / Paper products, and others in the study. A shift of economic activities from such above areas to Industries, Trade, Commerce, Hotels and other large scale fields owned by women entrepreneurs may be sustained. Support from Government Organizations and Nongovernment organizations should be provided for such activities. Then only women will be in high yielding economies and their real empowerment can be achieved. Women empowerment is one of the important area where majority of countries have focused upon as a part of overall Human

Resource Development. It is well ascertained by policy makers across the countries that strategic development of an economy required equal participation and equal opportunities to all sections and gender. Gender development is one significant instrument for sustainable socio-economic development. Women facing so many health problems. their health lot of impacting on society. In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the need to evaluate the impact on women democracy and development. It is the evident that majority of women involved in decision making a society's overall performance improves for example, global gender index reports have shown a correlation between the increased participation of women and the development s of societies in the areas of health, education family care, social welfare, the environment etc. By contrast countries with low participation women have seen a fall in the quality if social related services. Consequently, more effects are still requires to ensure that critical mass of women elected in to positions of authority and at all levels of decision making. In order to have effective competent women holding positions of leadership, political space has to be opened up for more women to participate in politics. Hence it is crucial to deal with the systematic and endemic barriers that hinder the effective participation of women in politics. Affirmative action policies, through constitutional, legislative, electoral and party reforms have resulted in an incremental rise in the participation of women in decision making roles.

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