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WOMEN IN INDIA AND ABROAD

Women Empowerment in India

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Concept of Empowerment

India's population is dominated by women, although they are the most marginalised in every aspect of their lives. A woman was recognised as 'Shakti' in the Dharma shastras of our ancient ancestors. She is revered as a symbol of 'fecundity,' and has been associated with Goddesses in our religious pantheon. The status of women in Indian culture started to deteriorate and they began to be seen as inferior and were also barred from the most significant domains of work. Most cultures' accepted male-dominated culture includes disparities between men and women, and women have been oppressed in all areas of life until today. Long-term gender discrimination has been made worse by the lack of development in many countries. Since the beginning of time, women have had a lower percentage of representation in various decision-making bodies than men. Even in our state and federal legislatures, women's representation has never surpassed 10%.

The term "women's empowerment" is used to describe the increased capacity of women to make important choices. The resources necessary to ensure the well-being of the whole family are at stake in these choices. The role of women in the home and in the country's economic prosperity cannot be overstated. Delegation is just one aspect of empowerment. It enables individuals to use their existing power in a more intelligent way. In 1993, India ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, one of the most important international accords on women's rights. Women's empowerment is essential to India's growth. In addition to increasing women's ability to generate money, active involvement in self-help programmes also boosts women's decision-making skills, resulting in true empowerment.

The phrase empowerment has a literal meaning of become powerful. At the 1985 International Women's Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, the notion of empowerment was presented. Empowerment was characterised during the meeting as "a transfer of social power and control over resources in favour of women. As a term for a social movement that aims to challenge the basic inequities in power distribution and relations, empowerment is used. As a result of weakening various societal pillars, such as family units, systems, and institutions, power is being redistributed .Many social scientists have defined empowerment" in various ways, and the phrase has a wide range of meaning .The word power is prefixed with "em" to form a verb. The prefix "em" is employed as a verb in Webster's New World Dictionary (1890) and meaning "to create," "to cause to be." As a result, empower means to create or bring about. The word "empowerment" is defined by the Social Work Dictionary (Barker, 1991) as the process of assisting a group or community in gaining political influence or applicable legal authority. "Empowerment" is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as: 1) legal or formal power; 2) permission. The act of endowing someone with authority or power. Empowerment is a process of shifting the balance of power in favour of those who are less powerful and more vulnerable. POWER it gives the weaker parts of the organisation the ability to exert influence on the decision-making process at multiple levels. Several scholars have attempted to define the term, however Baltiwala's definition is the most applicable to the method used in this study (2007). Empowerment is also described as a process of knowledge and conscientization of and an inner modification of one's consciousness that allows one to transcend external obstacles. According to the given definition, two things may be inferred. You don't need power to attain your objectives and ends in order to be empowered. Defining empowerment in terms of power directly allows us to better understand what it means. Awareness of one's rights, entitlements and conscience that gender

roles may be reimagined and gender equality is feasible (Longwe, 1996). Another benefit of empowerment is that it may be used by everyone, regardless of their gender, group membership or socioeconomic status. As a result, the notion of empowerment isn't only for women. As a result, women's empowerment or lack thereof is unique in that it affects women of all classes and castes and has a significant impact on families and homes (Malhotra, et al., 2003).

A woman's position and level of empowerment are influenced by the structure of the society in which she lives. Gender does not only refer to a person's biological sex; it also signifies the many tasks, responsibilities, and rights that come with being a certain gender. Even while sex-based duties, rights, and responsibilities fluctuate depending on class and stage of life, they may be found in every aspect of human existence. In this way, gender is a significant factor in determining social class. Furthermore, gender roles, privileges, and responsibilities are uneven. The positions assigned to women are always secondary to those assigned to males.

Women's Empowerment Dimensions

Giving power to, 'building power within', and 'enabling' are all examples of empowerment. Enabling people and communities to attain their full potential and capacities in all areas of life is thus a multi-dimensional process. Awareness, confidence, self-worth, organisation and participation in decision making are all part of this entire process. Then comes control over resources in an equitable and fair manner. It is a "Western" idea that women should be empowered. The topic of whether it is ethical and suitable for developed institutions to encourage the empowerment of women has been questioned not just in microfinance but also in the larger area of international development. The level of empowerment or disempowerment experienced by women and other marginalised groups varies greatly from civilization to society. An unwarranted imposition of "Western" norms on non-Western countries occurs when feminist campaigning implies support for cultural and social change. It's possible to classify empowerment into five major categories: educational, financial, psychological and social/political. Women are employed as a tool in each of these categories.

Educational Empowerment

Women's empowerment is best achieved via education. Women's rights and the nature of the criteria are not the only factors in this process of empowerment. Sexist stereotypes that hindered women from seeking their rights from males in positions of authority were dismantled as a result In order to achieve true gender equality, women must break the cycle of oppression that has been handed down from one generation to the next. This means that educational empowerment measures such as the right to study, gender sensitization and knowledge of the law as well as health education are all included. With increased knowledge, women are better able to protect their own economic security by expanding their pool of job options they may choose from.

Financial Empowerment

Women's notion of work and the right to work are bolstered by economic empowerment. Choose decisions, and the ability to exert control over their own life both within and outside the home. Their power to affect the course of social development and to establish a fair, social and economic order at home and abroad. When the right to earn and save, as well as business skills, is present, marketing skill, administrative capability, and ownership of assets were all considered important factors. It was possible to understand that women were going through a period of transition because of their experiences. Economic empowerment women who were economically empowered made significant contributions to the prosperity and well-being of their families and communities, as well as their countries. Employment programmes must meet at least three criteria: they must provide access to, as well as control over, money; they must enhance women's access to nonkin support, information, and outside connections; and they must increase women's access to nonkin support, information, and outside contacts. A research found that bettering women's economic circumstances might not only improve their well-being, but also elevate their social standing. In order to empower

women, four connected and mutually reinforcing components must work together: awareness-raising, capacity building and skills development, participation, more control and decision-making authority, and action to promote gender equality. The paradigm of empowerment has superseded the paradigm of client treatment, which dominated social work in the last decades. A woman's social, economic, and prestige position is determined by the function she plays throughout her life-cycle. Women's empowerment policies and programmes must take into account the intricate web of power relationships that weaves through the lives of women.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment refers to a person's capacity to overcome feelings of powerlessness and self-doubt (Sharma, 2000). Knowledge, self-respect, and other aspects of human beings may be defined differently in different cultures. Individuals' psychological sway was shown by terms like "strong resolve," "assertive character," and "motivation," which were universally accepted in society. When they meet with government authorities, they often show their self-assurance by going into the meeting fearless and explaining their concerns and challenges.

Social and Political Empowerment

In order to measure women's social empowerment, the social empowerment scale takes into account factors such as gender discrimination and female infanticide, dowry, marriage, poverty, caste and social justice. The underlying inequities of power distribution and interactions are challenged by empowerment as a social movement. When certain structures, processes and institutions are disenfranchised, the process of redistribution of power takes place. Sustainable rural structures, information transmission regarding health and nutrition, literacy and education, freedom and chances for women to realise their potential, and the adoption of modern agricultural methods are all promoted by social empowerment.

Their fundamental political rights, participation in state and federal decision-making bodies, representation in policy making, engagement in political campaigns, leadership quality and capacity to politicise their concerns are included in the political empowerment indices. A political problem in every country, poverty alleviation by the poor is no exception. Community-based and non-professionally led campaigns or programmes that encourage people to change their lifestyles, reduce environmental hazards, or improve their health and social well-being may be confronted by exploitative power in societies either apathetic, or actively hostile, to any activity that implies changes in their policies or practices In order for women to make their own independent decisions, they must have access to the knowledge and resources they need. To define a process in which women become aware of their own status and organise together to achieve greater access to public resources, empowerment is employed. As an example, moving away from professional campaigns and programmes and toward community-based, locally non-professional efforts to alter lifestyles, reduce environmental hazards, or address personal health and social problems may require confronting exploitative power in societies that are either apathetic or actively hostile to any activity implying a change in policy or practice Dalit women's leadership and decision-making abilities were emphasised by their involvement in local government and how this may lead to their role-transformation in society. As an example, moving away from professional campaigns and programmes and toward community-based, locally non-professional efforts to alter lifestyles, reduce environmental hazards, or address personal health and social problems may require confronting exploitative power in societies that are either apathetic or actively hostile to any activity implying a change in policy or practice Dalit women's leadership and decision-making abilities were emphasised by their involvement in local government and how this may lead to their role-transformation in society. Individuals, organisations and communities may take control of their circumstances in order to aid themselves and others to maximise the quality of their lives via empowerment. It is possible to think about empowerment in terms of a person's ability to govern their own resources, such as money, physical and material goods

and their own views, values, and attitudes. "Empowerment" has become a popular concept among academics and policymakers alike. Individuals learn to take charge of their own destinies in order to contribute to a greater good. It's a technique used by social workers to help those who have been left behind. Educational, economic, social, psychological, and political empowerment are all intertwined facets of empowerment.

Several empowerment mechanisms exist in India, including the following:

➤Literacy and access to a higher education; improved health care for herself and her children;

➤Increased marriage age;

➤Increased employment in the modernised sector;

➤Financial and service assistance necessary for self-employment;

➤Possibilities for advancement in power;

➤Complete awareness of her rights; and, most importantly,

➤Self-reliance, self-esteem, and the dignity that comes with being a woman

Conclusion

The collaborative decision-making process in the family, marital equality and increased mobility demonstrate that women have a significant level of independence and autonomy in their family lives. However, women are not sufficiently empowered to extend the independence and autonomy enjoyed inside the home to the public sphere by assuming decision-making duties. They are unwilling to abandon their family-centered lifestyles. When the majority said that they would not run for office regardless of family backing, they meant it. This attitude of women indicates that they have fully internalised patriarchal control ideals. Women's invisibility in the public sphere is a result of patriarchy's overriding power, which does not want equitable representation of women in decision-making roles. Because of the complexity of the patriarchal value system's overarching dominance in society, politics, and the economy, conventional indices fail to capture the interplay of maternal values within the overall dominance of patriarchal values.

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