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Understanding the relative relevance of women's empowerment in India

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Abstract

The improvement of women's positions in every society is crucial to that society's growth. Unfortunately, the reality of Indian culture is that women continue to face injustice and disrespect in a variety of ways, including inadequate nutrition, a lack of work opportunities, denial or limited access to education, poor health, lack of property rights, increased child labour, and abusive conduct at home, to name a few. When we examine their situation, we can see that it is pitiful. This is due to women's lack of education, overwork, incompetence, malnutrition, powerlessness, and poor health. However, the topic of female empowerment has gained the most attention in the current development debate, as shown by the current development literature. Women's liberation isn't a new thing. It has only recently gained currency in the oriental belt of the globe. The strategy of female empowerment is intended to overcome any barriers that might exist between men and women. During the 1980s and 1990s, researchers and specialists focused on empowerment, which is described as when women band together and assume leadership roles in their workplaces or communities. The 73rd Amendment Act has a provision for women's empowerment that is provided by the state and in which women are given 33 percent (recently 50 percent) of seats in Panchayats and offices. Women's liberation gained traction in the 1980s. It is widely assumed that sexual orientation segregation would dissipate if women carry out their responsibilities and exercises alongside their male partners.

A woman's development encompasses not only financial and political growth, but also domestic improvements. As a result, the paper will concentrate on the role of women in Indian society in order to examine the issue from a national standpoint.

Keywords: Discrimination, overworked, uneducated, poor health, empowerment, 73rd amendment act

Introduction

Examining the role of a country's women is one way to learn about its state. Women's position, in general, speaks to cultural models of all eras. The social status of women in a country reflects the social spirit of the time. Making inferences about the condition of women, on the other hand, is a difficult and complicated task. As a result, it is important to understand their historical position. There have been various phases of rise and fall in the role and job of women in Indian culture, from ancient to modern times (Ram, 2004) [6]. Females have been a subject of research throughout history, from ancient to modern times. Women's status varies greatly from one part of the world to the next. Females, on the other hand, may not have the same standing as men anywhere. Women's status in developing countries such as Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America, on the other hand, is as poor as women in developed countries might imagine. The word "status" is a relative one. It denotes neither place nor chains in sociological articulation, but only position vis-à-vis others in terms of rights and responsibilities. It denotes neither place nor chains in sociological articulation, but only position vis-à-vis others in terms of rights and responsibilities. In the end, status refers to "the combination of roles a woman occupies.....as a job, student, wife, mother...the power and dignity associated with these positions, as well as the rights and duties she is expected to exercise. The status of women can then be assessed in terms of their ability to participate in decision-making, access to education, training, jobs, and income. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the connection between a woman's ability to regulate her fertility and her ability to exercise. Enjoyment of life's other possibilities (Aruna, 2004) [1].

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Women in Indian Society: An Overview

Women's rights in India have undergone several transformations in recent years. The historical background of Indian women in India has been astounding, from equality with men in ancient times to the depressed status of the mediaeval era to the advancement of equal rights by various reformers. (Savita *et al.*, 2010) ^[2]. There is no denying that women in India have gained certain advantages, whether as a result of social legislation, advancements in the fields of education, health, and economics, or technological advancements. Engineers, pilots, journalists, teachers, administrators, judges, including a woman judge on the Supreme Court, State Governors, ambassadors, members of parliament, and ministers are all found, although in small numbers, as a result of a growth process. Despite these achievements, the state of women remains bleak. Despite the fact that concern for her emancipation in all areas is being expressed, economic freedom is crucial. Efforts are being made to ensure that she is not financially dependent on others. However, these measures have been ineffective. The modern worker is torn between two styles of jobs: her domestic work and her work outside the home. She doesn't have enough free time to appreciate the benefits of her financial freedom. Not only that, but she is frequently the custodian of her paycheck before her family arrives. Economic self-sufficiency is not the end-all solution. An equal amount of emphasis must be placed on the complete development of the woman, including her knowledge of her rights and duties, as well as the recognition of her job and the work she does at home. The social structure must, if possible, adjust the situation so that the woman does not have to beg for concessions (Rao, 2007) ^[3].

Atrocities on Women

Women in India are clearly victims of social change and economic exploitation, according to studies reported in daily newspapers in India. Rape appears to be becoming a fashion in everyday occurrence in cities, towns, and rural areas, according to media reports.

Since its inception, India has had a sex-based imbalance. The most important effort to modernize women's status was made in the early nineteenth century by numerous social reformers, whose struggles led to the passage of various laws for women's safety and upliftment. Following independence, the Indian constitution sought to resolve this genuine blunder by including a prophylaxis of Articles on specific rights and guarantees for Indian women, prompted by debates in the constituent assembly. In this respect, the United Nations plays a significant role. The United Nations has made significant contributions to the progressive strengthening of the social, economic, legal, and political aspects of women's roles through its numerous conventions and resolutions, as well as its four world conferences in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing. Regardless of all of these efforts to advance women, today's women continue to live in a precarious position.

Women and Empowerment: An Indian Perspective

Since women's status reflects a society's character, and women empowerment is a critical factor in determining women's status, it is critical to understand the significance of women empowerment in India.

What is Empowerment?

Positive attitude towards self and others

- Improved self-image through formal education
- Independent decision –making on economic matters
- Role in decision making on policy matters
- Power to participate in economic decisions
- Access to better health care and health facilities

We may call women empowered once they begin to enjoy freedom in all of these places. It would help her have a stronger self-image, which would motivate her to do better not only for herself, but also for her family and society as a whole (Praveen, 2008) ^[4].

Importance of women Empowerment

Women's empowerment is a continuous and complex process that helps women to participate in decision-making in all economy, political, and social processes in the general public, as well as increase their ability to change the structures and conditions that hold them disadvantaged. The 73rd Amendment represented a push for women's empowerment that was backed by the government, with 33 percent of seats in Panchayats and workplaces reserved for women. During the time spent in India empowering women, reservation in the Panchayats was seen as a significant milestone. When women account for half of the population, women's empowerment is critical to the country's economic growth. Ex-President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam noted that empowering women is necessary for building a decent nation, and that when women are empowered, society is guaranteed to be stable. Women's empowerment is critical because their values and considerations contribute to the improvement of a good family, a good community, and ultimately a good world.

It is widely accepted that a country's progress is impossible to imagine without women's empowerment. The global push for women's empowerment has created a similar situation in India, where women's empowerment is a top priority on the country's development agenda. The year 2001 was declared Women's Empowerment Year, despite previous proposals focusing solely on women's health. In India, the National Policy for Women's Empowerment was implemented in 2001. In order to successfully enforce it, a National Plan of Action for Women's Empowerment was adopted in 2003-04. The Tenth Five Year Plan included a coordinated methodology for women's empowerment with clear goals, priorities, and a time frame (2002-07). Since women's empowerment is influenced by both economic and social factors, the Indian government has implemented a fourth-three-dimensional strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment, and gender equality. The government has undertaken a number of initiatives, including schemes and plans, to ensure the success of the current framework. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Amendment Act, 2003, Sati Prevention Act, the Hindu Succession Act, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Various plans implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, such as Swayamsiddha, Support for Training and Employment Program (STEP), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (provides small scale credit), Kishori Shakti Yojana, Nutrition Program for pre-adult young ladies, are

just a few of the many ways the government has attempted to improve financial status and empower women equality between the sexes. Working women's lodgings and crèches have also been developed to assist working women in raising their financial power and advancing their social status. The 11th Five Year Plan's key goals are to strengthen the legal framework to eradicate discrimination against women and to mainstream gender perspectives in the development process (Neelam, 2009) [5]. The vision for the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) is to ensure that women's status and well-being are improved by resolving social and cultural barriers and strengthening gender mainstreaming.

Women rights in India

The Indian Constitution's Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties, and Directive Principles all support the principle of women's equivalence status. The constitution guarantees women's equality while also allowing the state to make positive discrimination laws in their favour. The following are some of the most important articles:

- Equality before law [Article 14]
- No Discrimination by state on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them [Article 15(i)]
- Special provision by state in favour of Women and Children [Article 15(3)]
- Equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment [Article 16]
- Securing adequate means of livelihood for men and women equally [Article 39(a)]
- Equal pay for equal work [Article 39(d)]
- Promoting justice on basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid [Article 39(A)] Renounce practices derogatory to women [Article 51(A) (e)]
- 1/3 reservation for women in panchayats [Article 243(D)] and in municipalities [Article 243(T)] Right to Property to Women [Article 300(a)]

Legislations

- Abolition of Sati Act, 1829
- Special Marriage Act, 1954
- Hindu Succession Act, 1956
- Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Maternity Benefits Act, 1961
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
- Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Sexual Harassment Bill, 2010 (Ram, 2004)

Conclusion

Despite the fact that the Indian Constitution gives women the same rights as men, they felt oppressed due to strong man-centric customs. The guidelines developed by Manu in 200 BC can be traced back to the origins of Indian female behavior. "Nothing must be done openly by a little girl, by a young lady, or even by a mature one, even in her own house," Manu says. When looking at the status of women, one can see how deplorable they are. This is due to a variety of factors, including women who are uneducated, tired, untalented, battered, frail, malnourished, and in a state of unexpected vulnerability. India has the largest number of girls who do not attend school. Because of social norms and the fear of violence, women receive far less training than

men. Women work longer hours and face more difficult tasks than men.

Men scarcely understand women's work, and they believe the majority of women's work to be invisible. The advent of technical applications in places where women worked displaced them, and the effects of technology had a dramatic negative impact on them. Men are in charge. Women's abilities to become familiar with the techniques that are required for different jobs are limited by their lack of regular access to instruction. Women's ability to acquire skills is hampered by their lack of mobility, low literacy, and prejudiced attitudes toward women. Higher-ups have preconceived notions of what women are capable of, as well as assumptions of what constitutes women's jobs. The most inevitable human rights violation in the world today is violence against women. Fear of violence is a cause for women's lack of cooperation in activities both outside and within the house. Insecurity outside the home is currently the most significant impediment to women's advancement. As a result, it is critical to close existing legal gaps, ensure proper and efficient implementation of policies/programs/schemes, and educate the administrative and judicial systems in order to eliminate roadblocks and ensure effective and blemish-free gender justice in India. In addition to legislation and cultural reforms, it is important to raise women's consciousness of their constitutional and legal rights. Furthermore, it is essential to reform society's perceptions and mentality in order to create a gender-just society in which women's equality is accepted and valued, and they have legitimate freedom and rights.

Suggestions

There is no shortage of policies; however, more focus should be placed on their execution. It is necessary to ensure that the device functions properly. The value of women's education must be made known to the general public. More scientific studies should be encouraged for effective measures.

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