



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 8.4
IJAR 2020; 6(10): 872-873
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 05-08-2020
Accepted: 22-09-2020

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A study of motivational components in respect to women's empowerment

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Abstract

United Nations population funds believe that women empowerment and achievement is very important need in itself but the question arises why do we need women more empowered? Our history answers this question and tells us how women were deprived of basic minimum rights of living a decent and respectful life, not only in India but in every part of the world. Our patriarchal nature of the society and the historical background is very much responsible for this. In present times, women are knowing their worth, obtaining their rights which the society had snatched from her, women are not asking for their permission to exercise their own right, they are practicing it with her full might and if not then fighting for it. The major five motivational components of women's empowerment are sense of self-worth, their right to have and to determine choices, their right to have the power to control and balance their own life, right to have fair and equal opportunities and resources and their ability to influence the society in which she lives. "She must not accept, she must challenge." They have many challenges ahead but with taking small and effective steps together, they can achieve the equality and respect that they wish for.

Keywords: right to have choices, ability to influence the direction of social change

1. Introduction

United Nations population fund believes that the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important end in itself. It is essential for the achievement of sustainable development as well. Now the question comes why are here we specifically talking about women life and their rights? Don't they have these rights and power already? Are they deprived of those basic right which is essential for every human being on this planet?

In 21st century India when we are talking about and working for artificial intelligence, advanced technology, planning to send Chandrayan-3 and progressing in various sectors of development; there is still a section of society who is unaware of all these news, don't even know their own rights or if they know, then fighting to get all the equality and respect they want on every front. They are fighting for safe environment, at work place, in their own home and also in public places, everywhere women are facing threats to their lives, health and well-being as a result of being over-burdened with work of their lack of power and influence.

This is not the new problem and we have histories where we get to know how we had only ruling kings and no ruling queens except few like Razia Sultan and Prabhavati Gupta. In later Vedic age, the condition of women got worsened, they were not allowed to read religious text like Vedas, participate in any religious rituals, performs sacrifices and participate in political or social assemblies or in any decision-activities, according to the Aitareya Brahmana, a daughter has been described as a source of misery. In Smritis and Puranas, women came to be regarded as a sort of property, she could be given away or loaned as any item of property. They were always objectified and got considered as soft option to hurt her or anyone related to her. Manu has written that 'her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects in youth, and her sons protect her in old age, a woman is never for independence.

Now mark this independence word and think how deeply these teaching has affected us and still affecting the present generation till date. The society has accepted this and all these difference and operation has been normalised.

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Domestic violence, female feticide, rape, molestation and eve teasing, unequal wages and gender un equality are the global reality and India is not untouched with these problems and I believe that our patriarchal nature of the society and the historical background is very much responsible for this unequal treatment and injustice. In present times, women have fundamental rights but the society will so called “allow” them to exercise their own basic rights to educate themselves, to live their life freely, to take part in community and political affairs.

We also can't deny the improvement and social awareness in present times. In Indian context, there are three basic indicators and motivational components for women empowerment; women's security, decision making power and mobility. Access to education is another concern, including the practice of son preference which leads to discrimination at base level. Indeed some state government are doing a lot for girls education and for women safety but it also depends on the actual initiatives taken and fully practiced at the ground level. Laws and policies on violence against women should be accessible to all among rural and less educated women as well. If the social stigma, fear of abandonment removes from the scenery then the situation can become better in rural areas. Melinda Gates has said “A women with a voice is by definition a strong woman. But the search to find that voice can be remarkably difficult”.

There are some interesting components of women empowerment;

1. Women's sense of self-worth;
2. Their right to have and determine choices;
3. Their right to have access to opportunities and resources;
4. Their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and
5. Their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

The above five components are applicable to the economic sphere, where women's economic empowerment can be achieved by targeting initiatives to expand women's economic opportunity; strengthen their legal status and rights; and ensure their voice, inclusion and participation in economic decision-making. The women's movement, asking for 33% reservation in parliament and several other rights and a wide-spread network of NGOs which have strong grass-roots presence and deep insight into women's concerns is contributing in inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women but they still have long way to go.

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