



EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN MAGADH- A NAXAL AFFECTED REGION

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ABSTRACT

For centuries women were not treated equal to men in many ways. They were not allowed to own property, they did not have a share in the property of their parents, they had no voting rights, and they had no freedom to choose their work or job and so on. Gender inequality has been part and parcel of an accepted male-dominated Indian society throughout history. Women were expected to be bound to the house, while men went out and worked. The traditional Indian mentality assumes that the place of women is mainly concentrated to the household activities like kitchen work and upbringing of the children. There is systematic discrimination against women economically, socially, politically and culturally more so, in India. These discriminations & disabilities are practiced at all levels day in & day out. Bihar has always been a disastrous place for women making them suffer by keeping them away from education, job, business, limited social activities and they are even affected by the extremists' activities. Women in Magadh region faces even the darker side of the above mentioned facts. They are in continuous fear of naxals. They women in this region are weak on both educational and political grounds. In this paper, all these issues and challenges are discussed for extracting an idea for empowering women.

Keywords: *women empowerment, Magadh, naxals, Bihar,*

INTRODUCTION

Women empowerment means emancipation of women from the vicious grips of social, economic, political, caste and gender-based discrimination. It means granting women the freedom to make life choices. Women empowerment does not mean 'deifying women' rather it means replacing patriarchy with parity. In Magadh region of Bihar, women are even deprived of their most basic right and that is survival. They hardly get any educational rights. On the other hand, they are also deprived of their human rights. They are left alone to survive and their male family members directly or indirectly join the naxals. The vision of women empowerment cannot be attained unless these circumstances change. In this regard; there are various facets of women empowerment, such as given here under:

Human Rights or Individual Rights:

A woman is a being with senses, imagination and thoughts; she should be able to express them freely. Individual empowerment means to have the self-confidence to articulate and assert the power to negotiate and decide.

Social Women Empowerment

A critical aspect of social empowerment of women is the promotion of gender equality. Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

Educational Women Empowerment



It means empowering women with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. It means making women aware of their rights and developing a confidence to claim them.

Economic and occupational empowerment

It implies a better quality of material life through sustainable livelihoods owned and managed by women. It means reducing their financial dependence on their male counterparts by making them a significant part of the human resource.

Legal Women Empowerment

It suggests the provision of an effective legal structure which is supportive of women empowerment. It means addressing the gaps between what the law prescribes and what actually occurs. Political Women Empowerment It means the existence of a political system favoring the participation in and control by the women of the political decision-making process and in governance.

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest sons of India, quoted that, “There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved, It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing.”

Therefore, the inclusion of “Women Empowerment” as one of the prime goals in the eight Millennium Development Goals underscores the relevance of this fact. Thus, in order to achieve the status of a developed country, India needs to transform its colossal women force into an effective human resource and this is possible only through the empowerment of women. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to building stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families, and communities. (Rustagi, 2014)

The crimes against women fly directly against orchestrating Women Empowerment in India. A report on the crimes against Women by the National Crime Records Bureau comes up with alarming statistics.

Crimes against women in India: Acid throwing A Thomas Reuters Foundation survey says that India is the fourth most dangerous place in the world for women to live in. In India, acid attacks on women who dared to refuse a man's proposal of marriage or asked for a divorce are a form of revenge. Acid is cheap, easily available, and the quickest way to destroy a woman's life. The number of acid attacks have been rising. Child marriage According to UNICEF's "State of the World's Children-2009" report, 47% of India's women aged 20–24 were married before the legal age of 18, rising to 56% in rural areas. The report also showed that 40% of the world's child marriages occur in India. Domestic violence. Many studies have reported about the prevalence of the violence and have taken a criminal-justice approach, but most women refuse to report it. These women are guaranteed constitutional justice, dignity and equality but continue to refuse based on their sociocultural contexts. As the women refuse to speak of the violence and find help, they are also not receiving the proper treatment.

In Magadh region, domestic violence and even sexual assaults over women is a very common threat under which the women their live. And even when they are not tortured, they are not provided with



basic amenities. When the male member of the family is a naxal member, the women of the family is under constant fear of being suspected of being an informer.

Dowry In 2011, the National Crime Records Bureau reported 8,618 dowry deaths. Unofficial estimates claim the figures are at least three times as high. Bihar has been the hub of dowry since the beginning.

Female infanticide and sex-selective abortion

Female infanticide (killing of girl infants) is still prevalent in some rural areas. Sometimes this is infanticide by neglect, for example families may not spend money on critical medicines or withhold care from a sick girl. Continuing abuse of the dowry tradition has been one of the main reasons for sex-selective abortions and female infanticides in Bihar.

Honor killings people marrying without their family's acceptance, and sometimes for marrying outside their caste or religion. Bihar is notorious for incidents of honor killings, In 2010, the Supreme Court of India issued notice in regard to honor killings to the states of Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Rape: Bihar is one of the highest rates of rape-reports among Indian cities. Sources show that rape cases in India have doubled between 1990 and 2008. Most of the rape cases in Bihar go unreported as the victims are threatened for death or they fear of ill fame.

Sexual harassment: The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act came into force in December 2013, to prevent Harassment of women at workplace.

A study by Action Aid UK found that 80% of women in India had experienced sexual harassment ranging from unwanted comments, being groped or assaulted. Many incidents go unreported as the victims fear being shunned by their families.

The Naxalite Maoist Movement of India is envisioned as the harbinger of a just socioeconomic order for oppressed and exploited people. However, it is its contribution to the upliftment of women that tests the movement's egalitarian character. Pamphlets distributed in several villages throughout Maoist infected areas on International Women's Day read, "No revolution without winning the class struggle. No freedom to women without revolution". Nonetheless, as far as bringing institutional changes to the cause of women is concerned, Maoism has had little to offer.

Need of women empowerment

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. Empowerment is one of the main procedural concerns when addressing human rights and development.

Women's empowerment and achieving gender equality is essential for our society to ensure the sustainable development of the country. Many world leaders and scholars have argued that sustainable development is impossible without gender equality and women's empowerment. Sustainable development accepts environmental protection, social and economic development, including women's empowerment. It is widely believed that, the full participation of both men and women is critical for development. Only acknowledging men's participation will not be beneficial to sustainable development. In the context of women and development, empowerment must



include more choices for women to make on their own. Without gender equality and empowerment, the country could not be just, and social change wouldn't occur. When women living in the Magadh region are observed, it is exhibited that the need of women empowerment is very necessary. Therefore, scholars agree that women's empowerment plays a huge role in development and is one of the significant contributions of development. (Johnson, 2015)

Methods of empowering women:

Scholars have identified two forms of empowerment, economic empowerment and political empowerment. (Bayeh, 2016)

Economic empowerment

Economic empowerment increases women's agency, access to formal government programs, mobility outside the home, economic independence, and purchasing power. Policy makers are suggested to support job training to aid in entrance in the formal markets. One recommendation is to provide more formal education opportunities for women that would allow for higher bargaining power in the home. They would have more access to higher wages outside the home; and as a result, make it easier for women to get a job in the market.

Race has a huge impact on women's empowerment in areas such as employment. Employment can help create empowerment for women. Many scholars suggest that when we discuss women's empowerment, discussing the different barriers that underprivileged women face, which makes it more difficult for them to obtain empowerment in society, is important when examining the impact of race in connection to employment. Significantly examining how opportunities are structured by gender, race, and class can transpire social change. Work opportunities and the work environment can create empowerment for women. Empowerment in the workplace can positively affect job satisfaction and performance, having equality in the work place can greatly increase the sense of empowerment. However, women of color do not have the same accessibility and privileges in work settings. They (Women of color) are faced with more disadvantages in the work place. Patricia Parker argues that African American women's empowerment is their resistance to control, standing up for themselves and not conforming to societal norms and expectations. In connection to power, feminist perspectives look at empowerment as a form of resistance within systems of unequal power relations. Within the societal setting of race, gender, and class politics, African American women's empowerment in work environment “can be seen as resistance to attempts to fix meanings of appropriate identity and behavior, where such meanings are interpreted as controlling, exploitative, and other- wise oppressive to African American women.” When talking about women's empowerment, many scholars suggest examining the social injustices on women in everyday organizational life that are influenced by race, class, and gender. (Gangadharan et al., 2014)

Political empowerment:

Political empowerment supports creating policies that would best support gender equality and agency for women in both the public and private spheres. Popular methods that have been suggested are to create affirmative action policies that have a quota for the number of women in policy making and



parliament positions. As of 2015, the global average of women who hold lower and single house parliament positions is 23.6 percent. Further recommendations have been to increase women's rights to vote, voice opinions, and the ability to run for office with a fair chance of being elected. Because women are typically associated with child care and domestic responsibilities in the home, they have less time dedicated to entering the labour market and running their business. Policies that increase their bargaining power in the household would include policies that account for cases of divorce, policies for better welfare for women, and policies that give women control over resources (such as property rights). However, participation is not limited to the realm of politics. It can include participation in the household, in schools, and the ability to make choices for oneself. Some theorists believe that bargaining power and agency in the household must be achieved before one can move onto broader political participation. (Jyoti, 2011)

Digital skills enhance political empowerment

Digital skills can facilitate women's engagement with local government and increase their decision-making power in their communities. The Women-gov project in India, for instance, has helped women improve their understanding of and communication with local government via ICTs. In Brazil, the project trained female community leaders to access and utilize online data on government health services to better respond to public health concerns in their communities. In India, the project worked with women's collectives to establish women-run, internet-connected community information centres to facilitate applications for government assistance (including welfare and entitlements), which in turn improved linkages between the collectives, local authorities and public institutions.

Evaluation of women empowerment:

Women empowerment can be evaluated through the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which shows women's participation in a given nation, both politically and economically. GEM is calculated by tracking "the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female profession and technical workers; and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence". It then ranks countries given this information. Other measures that take into account the importance of female participation and equality include: the Gender Parity Index or the Gender-related Development Index (GDI).

Importance of women empowerment

Over the past decades, there has been a steady increase in women's empowerment. Women must possess self-worth, confidence, and freedom to choose their needs and requirements. Classifying the people based on gender is unreasonable and it is having no worth. Still, women are paid less, expected to cook and restricted by their family members. To overcome these situations and to have an independent role in society, women's empowerment is needed. Empowering women is the fundamental right of women. They can have equal rights to participate in education, society, economics and politics. They are allowed to have higher education and treated in the way like men. In this article, you will know about the importance of women's empowerment. So



make a halt on this page and read the following content.

Able to solve unemployment

Unemployment is one of the common problems that can be seen in the developing society. The research says that half of the population consists of women. Unemployment of women and unequal opportunities in the place of work can be eradicated with the help of women empowerment. Whenever women are facing unemployment, their true potential is left without any use. To make use of the strength and potential of the women, they must be provided with equal opportunities.

Know about their intelligence

It is impossible to realize and understand the women by looking at them. You can predict their intelligence level by the way of approaching the problems and in the solution finding. In the modern era, women are well versed in solving technical problems. In these cases, women's empowerment plays a vital role.

Examine their talent

Women empowerment is the needed one for today's world. Still, now some parents are not aware of the women's education and they are not allowed to receive any higher education. The only way to overcome this problem is by knowing about their talents. If they are allowed to take the responsibilities as men, they can showcase their talents to society.

Enhance the overall development of society

Women empowerment is one of the key terms for the overall development of society. It is nothing wrong in taking part in the development of society. In the corporate world, women are playing several roles in fields like engineering, medical, and so on. They are not only taking part in the technology fields, but they are also actively participating in security services like military, police, navy and so on. All these services are taking society to the next level. (Roy, 2007)

For the empowerment purpose of society in Bihar Mukhyamantri Nari Shakti Yojana (MNSY) is in implementation since 2008 through mobilization of women force in state. Under the guidance of Department of Social Welfare, Government of Bihar WDC is making coordination effort at all 38 districts of state with the support of Civil Society Organization; Community based Cooperatives, Non-Government Organizations and District Administration. These schemes mainly address the empowerment need of women on the field of Economic, Social and Cultural.

Conclusion

The Empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century not only in Bihar but also at the national level. Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient to achieve this goal. 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 the Social, Political and Economic life of the Country with a sense of equality. To conclude, there is an urgent need for a sustained, comprehensive effort at all levels to attack this problem of gender bias from all sides in a focused manner. The area of Magadh must be prioritized and women who are residential of this region



must be educated about their issues. Educational programmes will be very helpful in empowering these women.

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