

Review on the Public Perception of Women Empowerment in the Prevailing Society

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Abstract: *Throughout the Vedic age and after, women have been subjected to a multitude of injustices, including gender discrimination and limited independence. The society's opinion regarding women was exceedingly severe, improper, and insinuated that females possess inferior talent and physical strength compared to males. Nevertheless, the dynamic social, legal, and economic landscape grants women the entitlement to education, freedom of movement, and various other rights that ensure gender equality. Currently, women are attaining equitable rights and utilizing them to demonstrate their capabilities or enhance their reputation. The evolving trends contribute to the increased effectiveness of women in various domains, including the financial sector and positions of leadership. This study investigates the evolving social conduct of women and their contributions to the advancement of different industries*

Keywords: Women empowerment, performance of women in Government and non-government organizations, gender, societal opinion

I. INTRODUCTION

The progress of a nation is contingent upon the advancement of women. Government and non-government organizations prioritize education, employment, and entrepreneurship as crucial elements for enhancing women's social status. Historically, women faced societal expectations and prejudice in order to persevere. In undeveloped countries or states, a patriarchal society enforces restrictive living conditions on women, and their impression of women as feeble and inept tarnishes their reputation. Nevertheless, the evolving societal expectations compel women to showcase their appearance and capabilities. Currently, education serves as the most effective means for progressing and addressing these problems. Employment prospects serve as a means to reach the highest level of achievement and strive for success. Education empowers women by fostering self-confidence, broadening their choices, enabling them to participate in decision-making processes, and granting them more access to and authority over resources. The education of women is essential for fostering economic growth and development, as it cultivates a competitive and beneficial environment. Historically, women encountered workplace discrimination characterized by inadequate remuneration and restricted job opportunities. Nevertheless, their present level of schooling empowers them to create a fresh societal perception that is significantly distinct from their previous one. These circumstances diminish the woman's drive to adopt a professional demeanour. Moreover, there are cultural barriers that hinder girls from achieving a higher level of education.

Women's empowerment involves cultural changes that increase awareness of their progress and development. Several factors that impact the advancement of women:

- a) A low literacy rate and a high degree of education.
- b) Optimal health conditions
- c) Minimum age requirement for marriage.
- d) Women's involvement in the corporate sector.
- g) Financial and non-financial support for those starting their own businesses.
- f) Increased political leverage.
- g) Details pertaining to their entitlements.
- h) Women's autonomy, self-esteem, and integrity.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Erika Zoeller Véras (2015) has undertaken study on the topics of female entrepreneurship, women's enterprise development, and the potential for generating shared value. Enterprise expansion can have a substantial impact on the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality. It also plays a vital role in the implementation of gender strategies. Thus, it is imperative to grasp these themes as a whole. However, there is a lack of research on the integration of these concepts. Although women are making notable progress in entrepreneurship, they still face challenges in terms of limited access to money, skills, and legal safeguards, in comparison to males. Therefore, the framework was established. Furthermore, their access to economic opportunities is restricted.

Kumuda (2014) has explored the notion that India's diversity and abundant heritage have a detrimental aspect. While women have been revered as deities, the practice of "sati" has also existed. In this tradition, women have tragically sacrificed their lives, serving as a poignant testament to the oppression they have endured. Although the problem has been getting worse, certain variables such as the high expense of schooling and instances of sexual harassment are commonly seen as intimidating. A multitude of women have triumphed over challenges, and we may expect to witness several further instances in the future. Providing education to women would have a positive impact on the community. Through the celebration of this women's empowerment festival, our nation may actualize its objective. The aspiration to regain its previous magnificence. To regain the status of the "golden peacock."

Pankaj Kumar (2014) has assessed that women's empowerment is crucial for enhancing women's access to resources and their capacity to make intentional life choices. Nevertheless, Indian society has acquired a reputation for being perilous for women. The elevated incidence of crimes against women serves as evidence of the pervasive compulsion inside our society, highlighting our culture's state of subjugation. Undoubtedly, safety is an outdated concept in modern Asia. In Asia, women are traditionally undervalued while men are often socially idealized. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, Asia ranked 114th out of 134 international regions in terms of gender disparity in the economy, government policies, health, and education. India rated 127th in terms of comparable economic prospects and 122nd in terms of women's engagement in the workforce. Women in both rural and urban areas experience a considerably lower employment rate compared to men, especially in metropolitan areas. In addition to education, the female literacy rate, which stands at only 50%, continues to be lower than the male literacy rate, which is 75%.

Manav Aggarwal (2014) asserts that women's education is the most potent tool for attaining influence in society. It helps to decrease inequality and acts as a way to improve their position within the family. Training is essential for everyone, but women's training has been overlooked for a long time in this male-dominated society. Empowering women will enhance the human condition by guaranteeing gender equality in terms of status, opportunities, and social, economic, and legal rights, as well as providing them with access to health insurance and protection against gender-based violence. This study examines the significance of education in promoting women's empowerment and assesses the current status of women's education in Asia. It exemplifies the paramount significance of education in the lives of all women.

According to Eswaraiyah (2014), the concept of women's empowerment has garnered attention from various entities such as government and non-government agencies, social scientists, social activists, academics, and researchers globally. This interest is particularly notable in growing nations like Asia. To mitigate the hardships faced by Indian women, the government regularly devises and executes various projects and programs. The self-help class program is a method that primarily emphasizes the growth of individuals, as well as the effectiveness of groups and the forefront of society progress. This study empirically investigates the empowerment of women through self-help organizations in the disaster-prone Ananthapuramu region of Andhra Pradesh. The study's findings suggest that Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have had a positive influence on women's empowerment, namely in terms of their social status, economic empowerment, and decision-making authority in various family concerns.

India has the second-largest population on Earth, as stated by Rupali Sharma in 2014. Approximately 49 percent of the entire population consists of women. However, when we analyze the present condition of women in India in relation to women in other countries, it becomes evident that the situation is highly unsatisfactory. Indian women encountered various impediments to achieving success, such as low levels of literacy, domestic abuse, absence of motivation and support, among other challenges. In Indian society, men often have a dominant position. For the country's harmonious

development, it is essential that men and women work together closely and equally. Higher education will be crucial in empowering women.

As to Manisha Raj's research in 2014, indigenous Indian women constitute around 50% of the Indian populace and have a significant role in both the direct and indirect contributions to the country's economic indicators. Throughout history, the majority of their financial donations have remained unrecorded, and they have consistently overlooked their humble sources. It is imperative to acknowledge the contribution of women in the economic growth and to implement measures that facilitate the inclusion of rural women, regardless of their educational background, in the development process, alongside both metropolitan women with and without education. Traditionally, it is acknowledged that women are more engaged in small-scale business endeavors as internet marketers. However, there has been a recent change, and they are now gravitating into the fields of IT, apparel/accessories, and food & beverages. Historically, women were predominantly employed in the agricultural sector, but they are currently making significant progress in the service industry. The government has implemented several initiatives to amplify the role and status of women, known as sachems.

Stephanie Cornwall's article from 2014 utilizes the results of a multi-country study program called 'Pathways of Women's Empowerment' to examine the ways in which women's lives might be positively transformed in different situations. The publication also offers recommendations for policies and practices. The text begins by providing an overview of women's empowerment in development, specifically discussing some key themes that have shaped feminist thinking in relation to empowerment and well-being.

According to Jos Vaessen's research in 2014, microfinance activities have expanded worldwide over the past three generations, providing tailored financial services to tens of thousands of underprivileged households. Microfinance is most effective when implemented as an area of intervention rather than as a specialized technique. Originally, microfinance primarily encompassed microcredit for funding day-to-day operations and small expenses. However, it has now evolved to include savings/deposits, a limited range of micro-insurance and payment services (such as micro-leasing), and a slightly wider array of credit options for larger investments. This study specifically examines microcredit initiatives, which are the predominant form of microfinance projects on a global scale. Microcredit initiatives have had a significant impact on the lives of clients and others in various ways. The primary outcomes commonly associated with credit at the individual, business, and family levels are improved cash flow, the ability to manage expenses more effectively, and the reduction of poverty. Additionally, credit facilitates business expansion, stimulates employment opportunities, enhances access to education, and promotes the empowerment of women. Although microcredit schemes vary in their structure, many have two common features: they specifically aim to assist marginalized women and sometimes utilize group-based lending. The relationship between microcredit and women's empowerment has been extensively studied within the framework of this microcredit program. Most of these research have been carried out in the framework of microcredit class programs in South Asian countries. Microcredit has been suggested as a means to promote improvements in women's personal attitudes (such as increased self-reliance), power dynamics within their households (such as control over resources), and social status. A crucial element of empowerment is women's authority over household expenditures. The main premise is that by extending credit to marginalized women, there will have a direct impact on their control over household expenses, leading to long-term improvements in women's status and the overall welfare of women and other household members. An extensively studied aspect of microcredit is the extent to which it empowers women to have control over household expenditure. This allows us to investigate the impact of microcredit targeted at women on their ability to make decisions regarding household spending, as well as the specific conditions under which this influence occurs.

Oriana Bandiera (2014) found that women in low-income countries have lower levels of empowerment compared to women in high-income countries. Elevated rates of youth unemployment, in conjunction with premature marriage and motherhood, restrict the allocation of resources towards human capital development and perpetuate dependence on males. This study investigates an effort aimed at fostering the empowerment of adolescent females in Uganda, which is the second-youngest country in the world. Young girls in this program receive comprehensive education and guidance on both professional development and topics related to sex, relationships, and marriage. After a few years, compared to teenagers in other communities, the influence of input raises the probability of girls participating in revenue-generating activities by 72% (mostly due to increased involvement in self-employment) and boosts their monthly income by 41%.

The prevalence of teenage pregnancy reduces by 26%, while the rates of early marriage and cohabitation similarly decrease by 58%. Significantly, the percentage of women who experience non-consensual sexual assault decreases from 14% to over 50%, but the preferred ages for marriage and having children also rise. The argument posits that the combination of professional and life skills can expedite women's financial and interpersonal empowerment, without being significantly hindered by restrictive social standards.

The economic status of females in India

The economic status of women in the Indian economy has undergone a substantial improvement, resulting in a notable transformation of the country's landscape. Women are employed in all sectors of the Indian economy. Women's involvement in economic activities enhances national economic advancement. The rise in the number of women participating in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy signifies an enhancement in their economic status. Women are motivated to pursue a career when they have opportunities for job or labor involvement. Based on the 2011 census data, the percentage of women participating in the labor force in urban areas is 25.51%, while the percentage of men is 53.26%. In rural areas, the percentage of women participating in the labor force is 30.02%, compared to 53.03% for men. In rural areas, the proportion of employed women was 24.8% and the proportion of employed males was 54.3%. In contrast, in urban areas, the proportion of employed women was 14.7% and the proportion of employed men was 54.3%.

Various organizations have established initiatives and endeavors aimed at promoting and supporting women, such as The Bank of Punjab's "Women Entrepreneurship Financing Scheme" which provides financial assistance for women to start their own businesses. Day care centers, bakeries, restaurants, catering services, furniture stores, interior design firms, retail shops, fitness centers, event planning companies, vocational schools, driving schools, jewelry stores, clothing stores, accessory stores, and any other feasible ventures. The following are the stipulations of the projects:

Organizations like WEAVCO, MARKFED, and MILKFED establish additional branches to facilitate their expansion. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) plan aims to provide microfinance to women entrepreneurs, regardless of the factors outlined above. The Regional Cooperative Societies (RCS), Punjab, and Chandigarh will implement a program to offer microfinance loans of up to Rs. 25,000/- to women through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), with the requirement of a personal guarantee. CCBs will allow PACS to obtain refinancing by leveraging loans extended to women. Furthermore, it established training initiatives aimed at equipping women with specialized production capabilities. The government or a semi-government organization provides subsidies for all trainings at PICT and in the field.

III. CONCLUSION

The group enriches women's life through many means, such as offering educational opportunities and enabling them to travel. Education plays a vital role in fostering the skills required for the progress of women. Women's changing role in society has a transformative impact on the economy, leading to a more competitive environment where they can demonstrate their abilities. The government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) prioritize the education standard as it is a vital element for every sector in India to embrace transformation. Modern women are actively involved in both the financial and political domains, possessing decision-making skills and occupying positions of significant power. Nevertheless, women residing in rural and semi-urban regions face discouragement in their progress as a result of the pervasive impact of society's unfavorable sentiments.

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