

Women Empowerment: A Rhetoric or Reality

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Abstract: *The paper, I have undertaken is invariably structured on the concept of ambivalent approach of women empowerment. Discrimination against women has persisted in every section of society, caste or religion since time immemorial. She faces discrimination at every step and in every walk of life from womb to tomb, cradle to grave. She is going to excel in every field by dint of hard work but on the contrary, she is becoming victim of dowry death, domestic violence, acid attack et al. She is always afraid of her dignity as well as social and financial security. Man and woman are two significant parts of a social fabric. As a Cart can't run properly if one wheel is not aligned properly. Similar is case of a family, society or a nation. The family, society or a nation can't make progress completely until and unless it's significant part (.women) is lagging behind. Society should come forward to create a amicable atmosphere in which there is no gender discrimination and women have full opportunities of self decision making and participating in social, political and economic life of the country. Gender equality has been appreciated even by the National Human Right Commission. A family, society or a nation can achieve a height only if it's all stakeholders are administered and governed equally by law of equality as every human being is equal before law. Initiatives of the Government alone can not be sufficient to achieve the objective. No doubt, women are going to excel in every field but these are a few number of women. More and more participation of women is needed from marginalized section of society within patriarchal cultural. People of patriarchal social system must change their mindset and play a progressive role for a better tomorrow.*

Keywords: Empowerment, Discrimination, amicable, gender equality, human being, social system

I. INTRODUCTION

The Empowerment of Women has become one of the urgent and prerequisite principle of society of 21st century across the globe. A brutal and horrible reality has become a current currency in the social fabric of our country. Recently, in Kerala state the dowry death case of a doctor Vismaya created a shocking wave across the country, consequently the Governor of Kerala had to sit on one day fast as a token of social remorse and grief on a ghastly incident of inhuman murder of women. The Nirbhaya gang rape in Delhi is another striking example of beastly act of demons and the such cases galore.

Another starking, shocking and surprising social reality regarding inter-state import of female on account of declining sex ratio in many states of India namely Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, M.P., U.P., Odisha. These imported females have been named as Molki. These imported females have been creating problems galore on many fronts: socially and psychologically deserted women have been placed in mismatching social discordant knots. Some of them even found absconding from the mismatch husbands, in laws and even anti-geo cultural ambience. His total game plan has been operating on behalf of touts, agents, pimps and inter-state gangs of Sodagars. What an irony of such a nexus of female marketing in the 21st century ! Who will stem the rot ?, How to curb the menace of declining sex ratio ? The proper implication of PNDT (Pre natal diagnostic test) act has come under cloud and dubious conditions of medical fraternity. As the society is marching ahead in the 21st century equipped with positivistic trends of women empowerment and women strengthening social paradigms especially in educational spheres and scientific advancements of technology supporting and augmenting the employment opportunities with equal footing of gender considerations. On the one hand we are adopting 5G technology and systems are equipped with e-tech Wi-Fi system and even webinars are being conducted on the same e-pattern, women are going in space, recently participating in Tokyo Olympics, I.A.S / I.P.S officers CEO of companies et al. On the contrary, society has witnessed brutal and demonic misdeeds of dowry deaths,

suicides, rape incident, domestic violence, female foeticide, Acid attack, culpable homicide in which women is the main victim of such gender discriminatory practices..

What an Irony! Who is responsible for such happenings? We say that we are progressing ahead towards women empowerment by providing 33 % reservation in PRIs etc women are representing Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, M.L.A.s et al. But think over it, are they really empowered by the social system ? It is an open ended Question. In real situation, elite class women may be empowered. Some exception may be in some families but how much an ordinary women or a rural women is empowered ? Therefore it is pertinent to express that the journey of woman is apparently oppressed, perennially perturbing, abysmally abject, meanderingly tortuous, patiently painful, knowingly dismal, deliberately, tumultuous, systematically anti-matriarchal, strategically ambivalent, glaringly glorious, historically hostile, conventionally, suppressed, venially vexatious and scientifically androgynous et al. The path of subjugation and mindset of marginalisation adopted by male-oriented social setup in global terms. The path of gender discrimination has been waded through various ups and downs since time immemorial. As Dr. S. Ram relates this issue in his famous book, Women Through Ages. "Feminism investigates that why women are marginalized and there are many divergence of views as they look at this very question from their ideological and methodological perspective". (Dr S.Ram 2004-03).

The aphorism of Rudyard Kipling, "The East is East and the West is West, and the twin shall never meet", the Islamic and Western civilizations rivet their attention on women with jaundiced, prejudiced, partial and biased perspectives. Both worlds reduce woman to the level of exploited, suppressed, dark shadow of devil and naked, libidonic usable commodity of use and throw. The Arabic world uses women with sheer crudity and cruelty, whereas the West uses woman as a subterfuge or an alibi of volition or freewill.

The polygamous world of Muslims is marked by its penchant for possession for more than one wife. Monogamy is monotony for Arabs. The liberal world of Westerners is marked by change of women. The Western man goes on trying one woman after another under the garb of female liberation, pseudo emancipation and volition of libidinal energy. Women in West may nurse an illusion of free-will and the glory of delusions of changing patterns of husbands and vice-versa. The most common thing about both of these worlds is that of superiority of male and libidinal choice of man to rule over female. The penetrating vision reveals one fact- that man becomes the Centre of incessantly increasing amount of faithlessness, and irresponsibility towards women". In India women remained a polymorphously potential object of worship. Devi, Devdasi and Charanon ki Dasi et. al.

Many scholars in India and in abroad have thrown light on afore-mentioned topic. They have discussed issues and challenges regarding empowerment of women, their problems across the globe. Some of them have given suggestions to lessen and mitigate their sufferings while others have explained the obstacles in spite of great efforts made by Governments. In the same scenario, I tried to describe the topic whether empowerment of women is reality or a rhetoric. Being a women, I observe the ground reality regarding empowerment of women belong to a rural or a dalit women. Female foeticide is one of the gravest and most frightful reality in every strata of society of India as Dr. S.Kaur has stressed in a very significant way how to combat against such a grave malady even in a sane society. This mortal offence is more sinful and grave than the socio-economic offences prevailing in a Indian society. It causes a new challenge to the emerging technology and scientific know-how in the clinical dynamics of preventive measures to tackle this menace

II. STEREOTYPES AND MYTHS

Women are victim of Stereotypes and myths which are out-rightly fallacious and erroneous such as

1. Men are intellectually superior.(Academic fallacy, Pseudo superiority ego)
2. Men are emotionally more stable than women (Error of understanding)
3. Men value achievement, promotion and meaningful work more than women. (Myth, Error of Judgement, Prejudice)
4. Men are inherently more assertive than women.(False consciousness)
5. The successful man possesses masculine attributes.(Male macho-image)
6. Men are more authority - oriented and competent. (Bias and Myth)
7. Woman's status is lower than that of a man. (False Archetype, Myth)

8. Man obliges a woman by marrying her. (Pseudo Social rituals and rites)
9. A woman should not do job to get economic independence. (Sadism)
10. A real woman is always wrapped in veil and shrouded in domestic chore from womb to tomb. (Machoistic, Conservatism, Obscurantism)
11. A woman should not retort even if she is provoked, insulted, coerced or humiliated by her relatives or outsiders. (Sadism, Obssequiousness)
12. Woman has been still tied up by the golden chains of conventions and silver traditions of bygone era. (Self inflicted, Gross Myth of female beauty)
13. The system of blocking the legitimate aspirations of a daughter-in-law i.e. the birth right of an out-dated mother-in-law. (Outdated custom, rites ,rituals)
14. Woman is a parasite, a beast of burden, a mere commodity of conspicuous consumption, a doll or a show piece, a personified frailty, male sponsored hostility. A victim or victor of system of the unkindest cut on her psyche or a constant quest for lost identity. (Gross rhetoric and Man made Myth)
15. Woman is a politically powerful , socially awakened, morally upright and technologically skilled lot. (Rhetoric, Myth and reality)
16. The 81th Amendment of Constitution has remained a distant dream regarding Women Empowerment at all levels of life. (Legal lacunae and bias)
17. A daughter- in- law is a maid servant of mother-in-law and a slave of a male slave (Son). She is a victim of double edged weapon of servitude.(Bias)
18. Woman is a poor, ignorant, illiterate, superstitious and suppressed lot who has low access to information and technology, low access to income generating assets, low access to new employment opportunities, low access to leadership position, She has multiple burden that remains unaccounted, invisible and most vulnerable creature on this earth. A woman is a constant victim of male debauchery, licentiousness and contemptuous allusions to exploitation of much neglected lot. (Stark realism, sadism and egoistic)
19. A woman is 'Cocooned' in her own gender disparity network. (Stark realism)
20. Women of rich families always jeer at serving married women of their own caste or class by justifying the false morality in the name of religion or traditions. (Feudal-fiefdom of the rich and neo-rich up starts)
21. An empowered Woman becomes a cynosure of eyes of elite women, who commit the ultimate social blasphemy by her dint of hardwork. (Realism)
22. The role of N.G.O. such as SEWA, YWCA, SCRIA, PRIA, et. al. have improved the woman status and gender equity. (Rhetoric and reality)
23. Mass media have played vital role in improving gender inequity. (Rhetoric)
24. Gender Development Index (G.D.I.), 2021: India has dropped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021. In the Global Gender Gap Index, 2020, the country had 112th position among 153 countries. The countries like Finland, Norway, New Zealand, Rwanda, Sweden, Ireland and Switzerland have stood among top ten gender-equal countries.
25. The former Chief Justice of India Sh. R.N. Mishra was of the view that women should look after the domestic chores. This is the indicator of male judicial judicious approach towards women equity. (Male Mindset bias)
26. Bell Hooks concept of a march from "margin to main stream" for female emancipation may be a dream yet to be fulfilled. (Visionary mindset)
27. Women are called weaker sex whereas they are more resistant to fatigue. What a fabulous contrast ! (Paradox of life and imposed frailty by male)
28. Women are immunologically superior whereas more anemic in biological terms. What a candid contrast ! (Paradox of life and imposed frailty)
29. Helen Fisher, the anthropologist predicts in "First Sex" that "women are psychologically primed to be the leader of the 21st century". But how can drag herself from the "traditional oxymoronic status", passive, slumbering social order out of its conventional smugness; shattering illusory concepts of male superiority and male strength. We have to disdainfully discard and combat against the aforesaid points to maintain the delicate

- delineative balance so essential to the objective study and dissemination of the gender issues, is in itself, a Herculean task. (Illusionary, Mirage and Chimaric)
30. Myths, stereotypes, biases, prejudices and discriminations are structured upon various socio-cultural, Psycho-geo polity based idioms and icons which are internalized and accommodated in the inbuilt system of a nation or culture. Which are innately against female equity. The low self-esteem of female, lack of assertiveness, victim of self-blame, jealousy prone and ill will props against female, conflicting and contradictory critical idiom against female, dependency syndrome with cross-cultural references prevalent and predominant in a system which covertly hinders the legitimate rights of female. (Stark realism and acute sensitization of Masses)
 31. Robust social health, hygiene and civic sense are the key to the sane society. Basic dignity to woman and her labour ought to be honoured and acknowledged. (Wanting and desirable reality of wishfulfilment)
 32. The motto of Murlidhar C. Bhandare's book The World of Gender Justice is that the female should have enjoyed "The Freedom to choose and Right to Excel." But women are vulnerable because of a "Vicious circle of gender stereotypes." He calls women neglect and particularly girls, " A black mark on our society." (M.C.Bhandare, 1999, 17.) (Realism)
 33. Dr. Madurima describes many incidence of violence that , " Due to asymmetrical roles, women assumed subordinate position denied equal status. They silently suffered discrimination, disgrace and dehumanizing practices. They tolerated their sufferings due to lack of alternative support system." (Madurima, 1996,20) (Lag)

III. DISCUSSION

Government of India has launched many schemes and programmes like Mahila E-haat. , Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao. Working Women Hostels, Nari Shakti Puruskars.etc. for the empowerment of women. Our Government of India has structured the department of Women and Child Development, as a separate Ministry starting from January 30, 2006, with the approach of holistic development of **Women and Children**. The government has introduced Domestic violence act, 2005 to provide safeguard to the women any kind of harassment or torture or any kind of violence against women. The government has introduced special courts for the speedy justice to redress the grievances of women as in the case of Nirbhya gang rape case under section 376 I.P.C..The family courts in cases of family matters including harassment, dowry demands and other domestic demands in the family have been dispensing justice to the women under dowry prohibition act, 1961. Recently **Teen Talaq** matters and maintenance matters to the women have been adjudicated to empower the muslim women in Shayara Bano case (2017) and Shah Bano case (1985). Justice R.S. Verma committee suggested speedy justice and speedy trial to rape cases. Government is providing free education to girl students up to Ph.D. level. Scholarship schemes are provided by the Government to the girl scholars. Admission in Sainik schools are now open for girls also and females are also getting permanent commission in defence forces. **International Women's day** is celebrated on **8th March** of every year to honour the social , economic , cultural and political achievements of a women.

3.1 Objective of Study

Our objective is to study the concept of empowerment the women in current scenario.

3.2 Methodology

Descriptive study of discrimination of women, analysing the ambivalent approach of rhetoric or reality.

3.3 Futuristic Vision

However, the Government of India has launched a number of schemes and programmes for the empowerment of Women, yet desired results could not be achieved. The policy, programmes and prospects of government to empower the women in every sphere of life could not prove efficacious and effective to create a society of gender free discrimination. It is therefore an imperative appeal to be disseminated among self driven citizens who can play vital role as a campaigner of social reforms to the core.of the heart and head. It is an urgent need to change the mindset of

people living in patriarchal system of society, by emboldening herself awaring about rights and duties. As in Muslim society, now **triple talaq** has become the thing of past like quit India moment. Child marriage is on decline. Sati Partha has been abolished a long back. Now in the modern era of Science and technology, **Man made myths and superiority complex must be debunked and dismantled.** Mindset of society towards Son preference should be disheartened. As seen in Panchyat Raj Institutions, male- counterpart attend the meetings on behalf of their wife/daughter-in- law. Females are only rubber-stamps. It is time to awake herself, empower herself, realising her inner power, become economically independent (keeping in mind their duties and responsibilities towards elders, youngsters, society etc also), come forward for self defence, against social evils, must actively participate in decision making within and outside family. Do away with dowry seekers. A common maxim that God helps those who help themselves is true. People should provide equal opportunity and conducive/amicable environment to girls in the family to prosper and excel. As **Meera Bai Chanu** got a medal in Tokyo Olympics and brought laurels to the nation Awareness camps should to be organized to create awareness among women especially rural / weaker sections of society for their secure and bright future.

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