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Women Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

Women empowerment is an important tool for social development and this can be achieved when the society recognized women as one among the social partners, provided them equal rights, facilitated them with equal education, health and out of all these allow them to participate equally and effectively. It is important to bring women in to the mainstream of development so that society benefits from the women empowerment.

Keywords :Concepts of empowerment, Importance of women Empowerment.

Women Empowerment

"To awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened, once she is on the move, the family moves, the villages moves and the nation moves."

-Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Empowerment of women is recognized globally as a key element to achieve progress in all areas. Empowerment of women has emerged as an important issue in our society in recent times. The issues of women empowerment is of paramount importance to political thinkers, women activists, politicians, social scientists and reformers, administrators and academicians.

* Concept of Empowerment

The term empowerment s rooted in the theories of "Paulo Freire." The term power is involved in empowerment. Empowerment of women involves important things-economic opportunity, social equality, and personal rights.

Empowerment as a concept brought at the International women's conference in 1985, at Nairobi. The conference concluded that empowerment is a redistribution of power and control of resources in favor of women through positive intervention. Empowerment of women would mean equal status to the women, opportunity and freedom to develop her. It would also empower women to be economically independent and personally self reliant, with a positive self- easteem to enable them to face any difficult situation. In a process of empowerment women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources.

* Importance of Women Empowerment

"Women's empowerment is intertwined with respect for human rights"

-Mahnaz Afkhami

In the ancient India the position of women in the society was exalted. But with the passage of time their conditions deteriorated from bad to worst. During the British rule some efforts were done to improve the conditions of women. Many efforts were done by other reformers to improve women's condition. The national movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was one of the attempts to draw. Indian women out of the restricted circles of domestic life into equal role with men. After independence the constitution of India has guarantied the right of equality to all its citizens.

Women constitute one half of the population in every society and the society that ignores the equal rights of the women.

It is an incomplete one and needs to be reformed. Women's empowerment is critical process in to the mainstream of development. It has been a major concern of the government since independence. In order to empower women and bring them in to the mainstream, an enabling environment with requisite policies and programs, institutional mechanisms at various levels and adequate financial resources has been created. Many NGOs are also working for women empowerment. International efforts have created awareness among people regarding importance of gender equality.

Women to be economically independent and personally self reliant, with a positive self- esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation. Empowerment is an active multidimensional process which enables work to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. Economic empowerment if woman is an indicator of human development and social progress. Educational, economic, social and cultural empowerment of women would become an important factor.

As women oppressed in all spheres of life, they need to be empowered in all walks of life. In order to fight against the socially constructed gender biases. Women have to swim against the stream that requires mere strength. Such strength comes from the process of empowerment. Empowerment of women helps to improve the status of women.

No doubt, today the state of affairs gradually improving. The rigid principles that had been set aside for women have undergone a remarkable change. Increase in literacy rate and marriage age indicates the decision making ability of today's women. Now roles of women are not limited to family. The gender inequality in literacy and employment is narrowed down year after year.

*The national policy of empowerment of women has set certain objectives in India.

- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- Equal access to women to healthcare, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

- Chaining societal attitudes and community.
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.

* Conclusion

If we are to translate the policy commitment of women's empowerment into a reality, we would have to change our mentality. First women should establish their own identity and respect their own individuality by believing in their capabilities. However, the journey towards progress is long and arduous. Women's participation in the process of development is of crucial important from the consideration of both equality and development.

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